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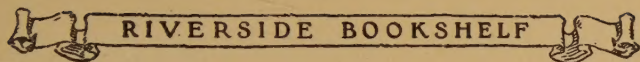
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Borrow, George
Lavengro

1940



BELLE PAID NO HEED TO THE INJUNCTION, AND TUGGED SO HARD AT THE HANDKERCHIEF THAT THE FLAMING TINMAN WAS NEARLY THROTTLED (page 299)



LAVENGRO

BY
GEORGE BORROW

EDITED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE BY
PAUL S. PARSONS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
HAROLD BRETT



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FOREWORD

IN deference to those who have made of George Borrow a touchstone, the editor offers a word of explanation. This edition is intended for young people. It contains less than one half of the book known as *Lavengro: The Scholar, the Gipsy, the Priest*. Naturally some passages of the original were omitted with greater reluctance than others, always with the need for reducing bulk as a spur. What remains was selected chiefly with an eye to producing a connected and interesting story.

The editor has no apology to make. Those who like their Borrow whole may buy him so in any of several excellent editions. This volume will fulfill its purpose if it serve to introduce a strange and delightful adventurer to a generation which has too little time for early-Victorian amplitude.

P. S. P.

WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT

May, 1926

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LAVENGRO



CHAPTER I

ON an evening of July, in the year 18—, at East D——, a beautiful little town in a certain district of East Anglia, I first saw the light.

My father was a Cornish man, the youngest, as I have heard him say, of seven brothers. The boy never knew a father's care; he was, however, well tended by his mother, whose favourite he was; so much so, indeed, that his brethren, the youngest of whom was considerably older than himself, were rather jealous of him. I never heard, however, that they treated him with any marked unkindness; and it will be as well to observe here that I am by no means well acquainted with his early history, of which, indeed, as I am not writing his life, it is not necessary to say much. Shortly after his mother's death, which occurred when he was eighteen, he adopted the profession of arms, which he followed during the remainder of his life, and in which, had circumstances permitted, he would probably have shone amongst the best. By nature he was cool and collected, slow to anger, though perfectly fearless, patient of control, of

great strength; and, to crown all, a proper man with his hands.

With far inferior qualifications many a man has become a field-marshal or general; similar ones made Tamerlane, the son of a blacksmith, emperor of one-third of the world; but the race is not always for the swift, nor the battle for the strong, indeed I ought rather to say very seldom; certain it is, that my father, with all his high military qualifications, never became emperor, field-marshal, or even general; indeed, he had never an opportunity of distinguishing himself save in one battle, and that took place neither in Flanders, Egypt, nor on the banks of the Indus or Oxus, but in Hyde Park.

I have already hinted that my father never rose to any very exalted rank in his profession, notwithstanding his prowess and other qualifications. After serving for many years in the line, he at last entered as captain in the militia regiment of the Earl of * * * * *, at that period just raised, and to which he was sent by the Duke of York to instruct the young levies in military manœuvres and discipline; and in this mission I believe he perfectly succeeded, competent judges having assured me that the regiment in question soon came by his means to be considered as one of the most brilliant in the service, and inferior to no regiment of the line in appearance or discipline.

As the head-quarters of this corps were at D——,

the duties of my father not unfrequently carried him to that place, and it was on one of these occasions that he became acquainted with a young person of the neighbourhood, for whom he formed an attachment, which was returned; and this young person was my mother.

I was not the only child of my parents; I had a brother some three years older than myself. He was a beautiful child; one of those occasionally seen in England, and in England alone; a rosy, angelic face, blue eyes, and light chestnut hair; it was not exactly an Anglo-Saxon countenance, in which, by the by, there is generally a cast of loutishness and stupidity; it partook, to a certain extent, of the Celtic character, particularly in the fire and vivacity which illumined it; his face was the mirror of his mind; perhaps no disposition more amiable was ever found amongst the children of Adam, united, however, with no inconsiderable portion of high and dauntless spirit. So great was his beauty in infancy, that people, especially those of the poorer classes, would follow the nurse who carried him about in order to look at and bless his lovely face. At the age of three months an attempt was made to snatch him from his mother's arms in the streets of London, at the moment she was about to enter a coach; indeed, his appearance seemed to operate so powerfully upon every person who beheld him, that my parents were under continual appre-

hension of losing him; his beauty, however, was perhaps surpassed by the quickness of his parts. He mastered his letters in a few hours, and in a day or two could decipher the names of people on the doors of houses and over the shop-windows.

As he grew up his personal appearance became less prepossessing, his quickness and cleverness, however, rather increased; and I may say of him, that with respect to everything which he took in hand he did it better and more speedily than any other person.

And now, doubtless, after the above portrait of my brother, painted in the very best style of Rubens, the reader will conceive himself justified in expecting a full-length one of myself, as a child. But he must excuse me; I have no intention of drawing a portrait of myself in childhood; indeed it would be difficult, for at that time I never looked into mirrors. No attempts, however, were ever made to steal me in my infancy, and I never heard that my parents entertained the slightest apprehension of losing me by the hands of kidnappers, though I remember perfectly well that people were in the habit of standing still to look at me, ay, more than at my brother; from which premises the reader may form any conclusion with respect to my appearance which seemeth good unto him and reasonable. Should he, being a good-natured person, and always inclined to adopt the charitable side in any

doubtful point, be willing to suppose that I, too, was eminently endowed by nature with personal graces, I tell him frankly that I have no objection whatever to his entertaining that idea; moreover, that I heartily thank him, and shall at all times be disposed, under similar circumstances, to exercise the same species of charity towards himself.

With respect to my mind and its qualities I shall be more explicit; for were I to maintain much reserve on this point, many things which appear in these memoirs would be highly mysterious to the reader, indeed incomprehensible. Perhaps no two individuals were ever more unlike in mind and disposition than my brother and myself: as light is opposed to darkness, so was that happy, brilliant, cheerful child to the sad and melancholy being who sprang from the same stock as himself.

So far from being quick and clever like my brother, and able to rival the literary feat which I have recorded of him, many years elapsed before I was able to understand the nature of letters, or to connect them. A lover of nooks and retired corners, I was as a child in the habit of fleeing from society, and of sitting for hours together with my head on my breast. What I was thinking about it would be difficult to say at this distance of time; I remember perfectly well, however, being ever conscious of a peculiar heaviness within me, and at

times of a strange sensation of fear, which occasionally amounted to horror, and for which I could assign no real cause whatever.

By nature slow of speech, I took no pleasure in conversation, nor in hearing the voices of my fellow-creatures. When people addressed me I not unfrequently, especially if they were strangers, turned away my head from them, and if they persisted in their notice burst into tears, which singularity of behaviour by no means tended to dispose people in my favour. I was as much disliked as my brother was deservedly beloved and admired. My parents, it is true, were always kind to me; and my brother, who was good-nature itself, was continually lavishing upon me every mark of affection.

There was, however, one individual who, in the days of my childhood, was disposed to form a favourable opinion of me. One day a Jew — I have quite forgotten the circumstance, but I was long subsequently informed of it — one day a travelling Jew knocked at the door of a farmhouse in which we had taken apartments; I was near at hand, sitting in the bright sunshine, drawing strange lines on the dust with my fingers, an ape and dog were my companions; the Jew looked at me and asked me some questions, to which, though I was quite able to speak, I returned no answer. On the door being opened, the Jew, after a few words, probably relating to pedlary, demanded who the child was,

sitting in the sun; the maid replied that I was her mistress's youngest son, a child weak *here*, pointing to her forehead. The Jew looked at me again, and then said, 'Pon my conscience, my dear, I believe that you must be troubled there yourself to tell me any such thing. It is not my habit to speak to children, inasmuch as I hate them, because they often follow me and fling stones after me; but I no sooner looked at that child than I was forced to speak to it — his not answering me shows his sense, for it has never been the custom of the wise to fling away their words in indifferent talk and conversation; the child is a sweet child, and has all the look of one of our people's children. Fool, indeed! did I not see his eyes sparkle just now when the monkey seized the dog by the ear? they shone like my own diamonds — does your good lady want any, real and fine? Were it not for what you tell me, I should say it was a prophet's child. Fool, indeed! he can write already, or I'll forfeit the box which I carry on my back, and for which I should be loth to take two hundred pounds!' He then leaned forward to inspect the lines which I had traced. All of a sudden he started back, and grew white as a sheet; then, taking off his hat, he made some strange gestures to me, cringing, chattering, and showing his teeth, and shortly departed, muttering something about 'holy letters,' and talking to himself in a strange tongue. The words of the Jew were in due

course of time reported to my mother, who treasured them in her heart, and from that moment began to entertain brighter hopes of her youngest-born than she had ever before ventured to foster.

CHAPTER II

WE once lived within the canvas walls of a camp, at a place called Pett, in Sussex; and I believe it was at this place that occurred the first circumstance, or adventure, call it which you will, that I can remember in connection with myself.

It happened that my brother and myself were playing one evening in a sandy lane, in the neighbourhood of this Pett camp; our mother was at a slight distance. All of a sudden a bright yellow, and, to my infantine eye, beautiful and glorious object made its appearance at the top of the bank from between the thick quickset, and, gliding down, began to move across the lane to the other side, like a line of golden light. Uttering a cry of pleasure, I sprang forward, and seized it nearly by the middle. A strange sensation of numbing coldness seemed to pervade my whole arm, which surprised me the more as the object to the eye appeared so warm and sunlike. I did not drop it, however, but, holding it up, looked at it intently, as its head dangled about a foot from my hand. It made no resistance; I felt not even the slightest struggle; but now my brother began to scream and shriek like one possessed. 'Oh, mother, mother!' said he, 'the viper! my brother has a viper in his hand!' He then, like one frantic, made an effort to snatch the creature

away from me. The viper now hissed amain, and raised its head, in which were eyes like hot coals, menacing, not myself, but my brother. I dropped my captive, for I saw my mother running towards me; and the reptile, after standing for a moment nearly erect, and still hissing furiously, made off, and disappeared. The whole scene is now before me, as vividly as if it occurred yesterday — the gorgeous viper, my poor dear frantic brother, my agitated parent, and a frightened hen clucking under the bushes: and yet I was not three years old.

I should scarcely relate another circumstance which occurred about this time but for a singular effect which it produced upon my constitution. Up to this period I had been rather a delicate child; whereas almost immediately after the occurrence to which I allude I became both hale and vigorous, to the great astonishment of my parents, who naturally enough expected that it would produce quite a contrary effect.

It happened that my brother and myself were disporting ourselves in certain fields near the good town of Canterbury. A female servant had attended us, in order to take care that we came to no mischief: she, however, it seems, had matters of her own to attend to, and, allowing us to go where we listed, remained in one corner of a field, in earnest conversation with a red-coated dragoon. Now it chanced to be blackberry time, and the two children

wandered under the hedges, peering anxiously among them in quest of that trash so grateful to urchins of their degree. We did not find much of it, however, and were soon separated in the pursuit. All at once, I stood still, and could scarcely believe my eyes. I had come to a spot where, almost covering the hedge, hung clusters of what seemed fruit, deliciously tempting fruit — something resembling grapes of various colours, green, red, and purple. Dear me, thought I, how fortunate! yet have I a right to gather it? is it mine? for the observance of the law of *meum* and *tuum* had early been impressed upon my mind, and I entertained, even at that tender age, the utmost horror for theft; so I stood staring at the variegated clusters, in doubt as to what I should do. I know not how I argued the matter in my mind; the temptation, however, was at last too strong for me, so I stretched forth my hand and ate. I remember, perfectly well, that the taste of this strange fruit was by no means so pleasant as the appearance; but the idea of eating fruit was sufficient for a child, and, after all, the flavour was much superior to that of sour apples, so I ate voraciously. How long I continued eating I scarcely know. One thing is certain, that I never left the field as I entered it, being carried home in the arms of the dragoon in strong convulsions, in which I continued for several hours. About midnight I awoke, as if from a troubled sleep, and be-

held my parents bending over my couch, whilst the regimental surgeon, with a candle in his hand, stood nigh, the light feebly reflected on the whitewashed walls of the barrack-room.

Another circumstance connected with my infancy, and I have done. I need offer no apology for relating it, as it subsequently exercised considerable influence over my pursuits. We were, if I remember right, in the vicinity of a place called Hythe, in Kent. One sweet evening, in the latter part of summer, our mother took her two little boys by the hand, for a wander about the fields. In the course of our stroll we came to the village church; an old gray-headed sexton stood in the porch, who, perceiving that we were strangers, invited us to enter. We were presently in the interior, wandering about the aisles, looking on the walls, and inspecting the monuments of the notable dead. I can scarcely state what we saw; how should I? I was a child not yet four years old, and yet I think I remember the evening sun streaming in through a stained window upon the dingy mahogany pulpit, and flinging a rich lustre upon the faded tints of an ancient banner. And now once more we were outside the building, where, against the wall, stood a low-eaved pent-house, into which we looked. It was half filled with substances of some kind, which at first looked like large gray stones. The greater part were lying in layers; some, however, were seen in con-

fused and mouldering heaps, and two or three, which had perhaps rolled down from the rest, lay separately on the floor. 'Skulls, madam,' said the sexton; 'skulls of the old Danes! Long ago they came pirating into these parts: and then there chanced a mighty shipwreck, for God was angry with them, and He sunk them; and their skulls, as they came ashore, were placed here as a memorial. There were many more when I was young, but now they are fast disappearing. Some of them must have belonged to strange fellows, madam. Only see that one: why, the two young gentry can scarcely lift it!' And, indeed, my brother and myself had entered the Golgotha, and commenced handling these grim relics of mortality. One enormous skull, lying in a corner, had fixed our attention, and we had drawn it forth. Spirit of eld, what a skull was yon!

I still seem to see it, the huge grim thing; many of the others were large, strikingly so, and appeared fully to justify the old man's conclusion that their owners must have been strange fellows; but compared with this mighty mass of bone they looked small and diminutive, like those of pigmies; it must have belonged to a giant, one of those red-haired warriors of whose strength and stature such wondrous tales are told in the ancient chronicles of the north, and whose grave-hills, when ransacked, occasionally reveal secrets which fill the minds of

puny moderns with astonishment and awe. Reader, have you ever pored days and nights over the pages of Snorro? probably not, for he wrote in a language which few of the present day understand, and few would be tempted to read him tamed down by Latin dragomans. A brave old book is that of Snorro, containing the histories and adventures of old northern kings and champions, who seemed to have been quite different men, if we may judge from the feats which they performed, from those of these days. One of the best of his histories is that which describes the life of Harald Haardraade, who, after manifold adventures by land and sea, now a pirate, now a mercenary of the Greek emperor, became King of Norway, and eventually perished at the battle of Stamford Bridge, whilst engaged in a gallant onslaught upon England. Now, I have often thought that the old Kemp, whose mouldering skull in the Golgotha of Hythe my brother and myself could scarcely lift, must have resembled in one respect at least this Harald, whom Snorro describes as a great and wise ruler and a determined leader, dangerous in battle, of fair presence, and measuring in height just *five ells*,¹ neither more nor less.

I never forgot the Daneman's skull; like the apparition of the viper in the sandy lane, it dwelt in the mind of the boy, affording copious food for the

¹ Norwegian ells — about eight feet.

exercise of imagination. From that moment with the name of Dane were associated strange ideas of strength, daring, and superhuman stature; and an undefinable curiosity for all that is connected with the Danish race began to pervade me; and if, long after, when I became a student, I devoted myself with peculiar zest to Danish lore and the acquirement of the old Norse tongue and its dialects, I can only explain the matter by the early impression received at Hythe from the tale of the old sexton, beneath the pent-house, and the sight of the Danish skull.

And thus we went on straying from place to place, at Hythe to-day, and perhaps within a week looking out from our hostel-window upon the streets of old Winchester, our motions ever in accordance with the 'route' of the regiment, so habituated to change of scene that it had become almost necessary to our existence.

CHAPTER III

I HAD now attained the age of six. I loved to look upon the heavens, and to bask in the rays of the sun, or to sit beneath hedgerows and listen to the chirping of the birds, indulging the while in musing and meditation as far as my very limited circle of ideas would permit; but, unlike my brother, who was at this time at school, and whose rapid progress in every branch of instruction astonished and delighted his preceptors, I took no pleasure in books, whose use, indeed, I could scarcely comprehend, and bade fair to be as arrant a dunce as ever brought the blush of shame into the cheeks of anxious and affectionate parents.

But the time was now at hand when the ice which had hitherto bound the mind of the child with its benumbing power was to be thawed, and a world of sensations and ideas awakened to which it had hitherto been an entire stranger. One day a young lady, an intimate acquaintance of our family, and godmother to my brother, drove up to the house in which we dwelt; she stayed some time conversing with my mother, and on rising to depart she put down on the table a small packet, exclaiming, 'I have brought a little present for each of the boys; the one is a History of England, which I intend for my godson when he returns from school, the other

is ——' and here she said something which escaped my ear, as I sat at some distance, moping in a corner: — 'I intend it for the youngster yonder,' pointing to myself; she then departed, and, my mother going out shortly after, I was left alone.

I remember for some time sitting motionless in my corner, with my eyes bent upon the ground; at last I lifted my head and looked upon the packet as it lay on the table. All at once a strange sensation came over me, such as I had never experienced before — a singular blending of curiosity, awe, and pleasure, the remembrance of which, even at this distance of time, produces a remarkable effect upon my nervous system.

A book of some description had been brought for me, a present by no means calculated to interest me; what cared I for books? I had already many into which I never looked but from compulsion; friends, moreover, had presented me with similar things before, which I had entirely disregarded, and what was there in this particular book, whose very title I did not know, calculated to attract me more than the rest? yet something within told me that my fate was connected with the book which had been last brought; so, after looking on the packet from my corner for a considerable time, I got up and went to the table.

The packet was lying where it had been left — I took it up; had the envelope, which consisted of

whitish-brown paper, been secured by a string or a seal I should not have opened it, as I should have considered such an act almost in the light of a crime; the books, however, had been merely folded up, and I therefore considered that there could be no possible harm in inspecting them, more especially as I had received no injunction to the contrary. Perhaps there was something unsound in this reasoning, something sophistical; but a child is sometimes as ready as a grown-up person in finding excuses for doing that which he is inclined to do. But whether the action was right or wrong, and I am afraid it was not altogether right, I undid the packet: it contained three books; two from their similarity seemed to be separate parts of one and the same work; they were handsomely bound, and to them I first turned my attention. I opened them successively and endeavoured to make out their meaning; their contents, however, as far as I was able to understand them, were by no means interesting: whoever pleases may read these books for me, and keep them too, into the bargain, said I to myself.

I now took up the third book: it did not resemble the others, being longer and considerably thicker; the binding was of dingy calf skin. I opened it, and as I did so another strange thrill of pleasure shot through my frame. The first object on which my eyes rested was a picture; it was ex-

ceedingly well executed, at least the scene which it represented made a vivid impression upon me, which would hardly have been the case had the artist not been faithful to nature. A wild scene it was — a heavy sea and rocky shore, with mountains in the background, above which the moon was peering. Not far from the shore, upon the water, was a boat with two figures in it, one of which stood at the bow, pointing with what I knew to be a gun at a dreadful shape in the water; fire was flashing from the muzzle of the gun, and the monster appeared to be transfixed. I almost thought I heard its cry. I remained motionless, gazing upon the picture, scarcely daring to draw my breath, lest the new and wondrous world should vanish of which I had now obtained a glimpse. ‘Who are those people, and what could have brought them into that strange situation?’ I asked of myself; and now the seed of curiosity, which had so long lain dormant, began to expand, and I vowed to myself to become speedily acquainted with the whole history of the people in the boat. After looking on the picture till every mark and line in it were familiar to me, I turned over various leaves till I came to another engraving; a new source of wonder — a low sandy beach on which the furious sea was breaking in mountain-like billows; cloud and rack deformed the firmament, which wore a dull and leaden-like hue; gulls and other aquatic fowls were toppling

upon the blast, or skimming over the tops of the maddening waves — ‘Mercy upon him! he must be drowned!’ I exclaimed, as my eyes fell upon a poor wretch who appeared to be striving to reach the shore; he was upon his legs, but was evidently half-smothered with the brine; high above his head curled a horrible billow, as if to engulf him for ever. ‘He must be drowned! he must be drowned!’ I almost shrieked, and dropped the book. I soon snatched it up again, and now my eye lighted on a third picture: again a shore, but what a sweet and lovely one, and how I wished to be treading it; there were beautiful shells lying on the smooth white sand; some were empty like those I had occasionally seen on marble mantelpieces, but out of others peered the heads and bodies of wondrous crayfish; a wood of thick green trees skirted the beach and partly shaded it from the rays of the sun, which shone hot above, while blue waves slightly crested with foam were gently curling against it; there was a human figure upon the beach, wild and uncouth, clad in the skins of animals, with a huge cap on his head, a hatchet at his girdle, and in his hand a gun; his feet and legs were bare; he stood in an attitude of horror and surprise; his body was bent far back, and his eyes, which seemed starting out of his head, were fixed upon a mark on the sand — a large distinct mark — a human footprint!

Reader, is it necessary to name the book which now stood open in my hand, and whose very prints, feeble expounders of its wondrous lines, had produced within me emotions strange and novel?

The true chord had not been touched; a raging curiosity with respect to the contents of the volume, whose engravings had fascinated my eye, burned within me, and I never rested until I had fully satisfied it; weeks succeeded weeks, months followed months, and the wondrous volume was my only study and principal source of amusement. For hours together I would sit poring over a page till I had become acquainted with the import of every line. My progress, slow enough at first, became by degrees more rapid, till at last, under a 'shoulder-of-mutton sail,' I found myself cantering before a steady breeze over an ocean of enchantment, so well pleased with my voyage that I cared not how long it might be ere it reached its termination.

And it was in this manner that I first took to the paths of knowledge.

We passed many months at this place: nothing, however, occurred requiring any particular notice, relating to myself, beyond what I have already stated, and I am not writing the history of others. At length my father was recalled to his regiment which at that time was stationed at a place called Norman Cross, in Lincolnshire, or rather Hunting-

donshire, at some distance from the old town of Peterborough. For this place he departed, leaving my mother and myself to follow in a few days. Our journey was a singular one. On the second day we reached a marshy and fenny country, which, owing to immense quantities of rain which had lately fallen, was completely submerged. At a large town we got on board a kind of passage-boat crowded with people; it had neither sails nor oars, and these were not the days of steam vessels; it was a treck-schuyt,¹ and was drawn by horses.

Young as I was, there was much connected with this journey which highly surprised me, and which brought to my remembrance particular scenes described in the book which I now generally carried in my bosom. The country was, as I have already said, submerged — entirely drowned — no land was visible; the trees were growing bolt upright in the flood, whilst farmhouses and cottages were standing insulated; the horses which drew us were up to the knees in water, and, on coming to blind pools and ‘greedy depths,’ were not unfrequently swimming, in which case the boys or urchins who mounted them sometimes stood, sometimes knelt, upon the saddle and pillions. No accident, however, occurred either to the quadrupeds or bipeds, who appeared respectively to be quite *au fait* in their business, and extricated themselves with the

¹ Canal-boat.

greatest ease from places in which Pharaoh and all his host would have gone to the bottom. Nightfall brought us to Peterborough, and from thence we were not slow in reaching the place of our destination.

CHAPTER IV

It was midsummer when we arrived at this place, and the weather, which had for a long time been wet and gloomy, now became bright and glorious; I was subjected to but little control, and passed my time pleasantly enough, principally in wandering about the neighbouring country. It was flat and somewhat fenny, a district more of pasture than agriculture, and not very thickly inhabited. I soon became well acquainted with it. At the distance of two miles from the station was a large lake, styled in the dialect of the country 'a mere,' about whose borders tall reeds were growing in abundance, this was a frequent haunt of mine; but my favourite place of resort was a wild sequestered spot at a somewhat greater distance. Here, surrounded with woods and thick groves, was the seat of some ancient family, deserted by the proprietor, and only inhabited by a rustic servant or two. A place more solitary and wild could scarcely be imagined; the garden and walks were overgrown with weeds and briars, and the unpruned woods were so tangled as to be almost impervious. About this domain I would wander till overtaken by fatigue, and then I would sit down with my back against some beech, elm, or stately alder tree, and, taking out my book,

would pass hours in a state of unmixed enjoyment, my eyes now fixed on the wondrous pages, now glancing at the sylvan scene around; and sometimes I would drop the book and listen to the voice of the rooks and wild pigeons, and not unfrequently to the croaking of multitudes of frogs from the neighbouring swamps and fens.

In going to and from this place I frequently passed a tall elderly individual, dressed in rather a quaint fashion, with a skin cap on his head and stout gaiters on his legs; on his shoulders hung a moderate-sized leathern sack; he seemed fond of loitering near sunny banks, and of groping amidst furze and low scrubby bramble bushes, of which there were plenty in the neighbourhood of Norman Cross. Once I saw him standing in the middle of a dusty road, looking intently at a large mark which seemed to have been drawn across it, as if by a walking-stick. 'He must have been a large one,' the old man muttered half to himself, 'or he would not have left such a trail. I wonder if he is near; he seems to have moved this way.' He then went behind some bushes which grew on the right side of the road, and appeared to be in quest of something, moving behind the bushes with his head downwards, and occasionally striking the roots with his foot: at length he exclaimed, 'Here he is!' and forthwith I saw him dart amongst the bushes. There was a kind of scuffling noise, the rustling of

branches, and the crackling of dry sticks. 'I have him!' said the man at last; 'I have got him!' and presently he made his appearance about twenty yards down the road, holding a large viper in his hand. 'What do you think of that, my boy?' said he, as I went up to him; 'what do you think of catching such a thing as that with the naked hand?' 'What do I think?' said I. 'Why, that I could do as much myself.' 'You do,' said the man, 'do you? Lord! how the young people in these days are given to conceit; it did not use to be so in my time: when I was a child, childer knew how to behave themselves; but the childer of these days are full of conceit, full of froth, like the mouth of this viper'; and with his forefinger and thumb he squeezed a considerable quantity of foam from the jaws of the viper down upon the road. 'The childer of these days are a generation of — God forgive me, what was I about to say!' said the old man; and opening his bag he thrust the reptile into it, which appeared far from empty. I passed on. As I was returning, towards the evening, I overtook the old man, who was wending in the same direction. 'Good evening to you, sir,' said I, taking off a cap which I wore on my head. 'Good evening,' said the old man; and then, looking at me, 'How's this?' said he, 'you ar'n't, sure, the child I met in the morning?' 'Yes,' said I, 'I am; what makes you doubt it?' 'Why, you were then all froth and conceit,' said the old

man, 'and now you take off your cap to me.' 'I beg your pardon,' said I, 'if I was frothy and conceited, it ill becomes a child like me to be so.' 'That's true, dear,' said the old man; 'well; as you have begged my pardon, I truly forgive you.' 'Thank you,' said I; 'have you caught any more of those things?' 'Only four or five,' said the old man; 'they are getting scarce, though this used to be a great neighbourhood for them.' 'And what do you do with them?' said I; 'do you carry them home and play with them?' 'I sometimes play with one or two that I tame,' said the old man; 'but I hunt them mostly for the fat which they contain, out of which I make unguents which are good for various sore troubles, especially for the rheumatism.' 'And do you get your living by hunting these creatures?' I demanded. 'Not altogether,' said the old man; 'besides being a viper-hunter, I am what they call a herbalist, one who knows the virtue of particular herbs; I gather them at the proper season to make medicines with for the sick.' 'And do you live in the neighbourhood,' I demanded. 'You seem very fond of asking questions, child. No, I do not live in this neighbourhood in particular, I travel about; I have not been in this neighbourhood till lately for some years.'

From this time the old man and myself formed an acquaintance; I often accompanied him in his wanderings about the neighbourhood, and on two or

three occasions assisted him in catching the reptiles which he hunted. He generally carried a viper with him which he had made quite tame, and from which he had extracted the poisonous fangs; it would dance and perform various kinds of tricks. He was fond of telling me anecdotes connected with his adventures with the reptile species. 'But,' said he one day, sighing, 'I must shortly give up this business, I am no longer the man I was, I am become timid, and when a person is timid in viper-hunting he had better leave off, as it is quite clear his virtue is leaving him. I got a fright some years ago, which I am quite sure I shall never get the better¹ of; my hand has been shaky more or less ever since.' 'What frightened you?' said I. 'I had better not tell you,' said the old man, 'or you may be frightened too, lose your virtue, and be no longer good for the business.' 'I don't care,' said I; 'I don't intend to follow the business; I dare say I shall be an officer, like my father.' 'Well,' said the old man, 'I once saw the king of the vipers, and since then ——' 'The king of the vipers!' said I, interrupting him; 'have the vipers a king?' 'As sure as we have,' said the old man, 'as sure as we have King George to rule over us, have these reptiles a king to rule over them.' 'And where did you see him?' said I. 'I will tell you,' said the old man, 'though I don't like talking about the matter. It may be about seven years ago that I happened to be far down yonder to

the west, on the other side of England, nearly two hundred miles from here, following my business. It was a very sultry day, I remember, and I had been out several hours catching creatures. It might be about three o'clock in the afternoon, when I found myself on some heathy land near the sea, on the ridge of a hill, the side of which, nearly as far down as the sea, was heath; but on the top there was arable ground, which had been planted, and from which the harvest had been gathered — oats or barley, I know not which — but I remember that the ground was covered with stubble. Well, about three o'clock, as I told you before, what with the heat of the day and from having walked about for hours in a lazy way, I felt very tired, so I determined to have a sleep, and I laid myself down, my head just on the ridge of the hill towards the field, and my body over the side down amongst the heath; my bag, which was nearly filled with creatures, lay at a little distance from my face; the creatures were struggling in it, I remember, and I thought to myself, how much more comfortably off I was than they; I was taking my ease on the nice open hill, cooled with the breezes, whilst they were in the nasty close bag, coiling about one another, and breaking their very hearts all to no purpose: and I felt quite comfortable and happy in the thought, and little by little closed my eyes, and fell into the sweetest snooze that ever I was in in all my life; and

there I lay over the hill's side, with my head half in the field, I don't know how long, all dead asleep. At last it seemed to me that I heard a noise in my sleep, something like a thing moving, very faint, however, far away; then it died, and then it came again upon my ear as I slept, and now appeared almost as if I heard crackle, crackle; then it died again, or I became yet more dead asleep than before, I know not which, but I certainly lay some time without hearing it. All of a sudden I became awake, and there was I, on the ridge of the hill, with my cheek on the ground towards the stubble, with a noise in my ear like that of something moving towards me, amongst the stubble of the field; well, I lay a moment or two listening to the noise, and then I became frightened, for I did not like the noise at all, it sounded so odd; so I rolled myself on my belly, and looked towards the stubble. Mercy upon us! There was a huge snake, or rather a dreadful viper, for it was all yellow and gold, moving towards me, bearing its head about a foot and a half above the ground, the dry stubble crackling beneath its outrageous belly. It might be about five yards off when I first saw it, making straight towards me, child, as if it would devour me. I lay quite still, for I was stupefied with horror, whilst the creature came still nearer; and now it was nearly upon me, when it suddenly drew back a little, and then — what do you think? — it lifted

its head and chest high in the air, and high over my face as I looked up, flickering at me with its tongue as if it would fly at my face. Child, what I felt at that moment I can scarcely say, but it was a sufficient punishment for all the sins I ever committed; and there we two were, I looking up at the viper, and the viper looking down upon me, flickering at me with its tongue. It was only the kindness of God that saved me: all at once there was a loud noise, the report of a gun, for a fowler was shooting at a covey of birds, a little way off in the stubble. Whereupon the viper sunk its head, and immediately made off over the ridge of the hill, down in the direction of the sea. As it passed by me, however — and it passed close by me — it hesitated a moment, as if it was doubtful whether it should not seize me; it did not, however, but made off down the hill. It has often struck me that he was angry with me, and came upon me unawares for presuming to meddle with his people, as I have always been in the habit of doing.'

'But,' said I, 'how do you know that it was the king of the vipers?'

'How do I know?' said the old man, 'who else should it be? There was as much difference between it and other reptiles as between King George and other people.'

'Is King George, then, different from other people?' I demanded.

‘Of course,’ said the old man; ‘I have never seen him myself, but I have heard people say that he is a ten times greater man than other folks; indeed, it stands to reason that he must be different from the rest, else people would not be so eager to see him.’

When the old man left the country, which he did a few days after the conversation which I have just related, he left me the reptile which he had tamed and rendered quite harmless by removing the fangs. I was in the habit of feeding it with milk, and frequently carried it abroad with me in my walks.

CHAPTER V

ONE day it happened that, being on my rambles, I entered a green lane which I had never seen before; at first it was rather narrow, but as I advanced it became considerably wider; in the middle was a driftway with deep ruts, but right and left was a space carpeted with a sward of trefoil and clover; there was no lack of trees, chiefly ancient oaks, which, flinging out their arms from either side, nearly formed a canopy, and afforded a pleasing shelter from the rays of the sun, which was burning fiercely above. Suddenly a group of objects attracted my attention. Beneath one of the largest of the trees, upon the grass, was a kind of low tent or booth, from the top of which a thin smoke was curling; beside it stood a couple of light carts, whilst two or three lean horses or ponies were cropping the herbage which was growing nigh. Wondering to whom this odd tent could belong, I advanced till I was close before it, when I found that it consisted of two tilts, like those of waggons, placed upon the ground and fronting each other, connected behind by a sail or large piece of canvas which was but partially drawn across the top; upon the ground, in the intervening space, was a fire, over which, supported by a kind of iron crowbar, hung a caldron;

my advance had been so noiseless as not to alarm the inmates, who consisted of a man and woman, who sat apart, one on each side of the fire; they were both busily employed — the man was carding plaited straw, whilst the woman seemed to be rubbing something with a white powder, some of which lay on a plate beside her; suddenly the man looked up, and, perceiving me, uttered a strange kind of cry, and the next moment both the woman and himself were on their feet and rushing upon me.

I retreated a few steps, yet without turning to flee. I was not, however, without apprehension, which, indeed, the appearance of these two people was well calculated to inspire; the woman was a stout figure, seemingly between thirty and forty; she wore no cap, and her long hair fell on either side of her head like horse-tails half-way down her waist; her skin was dark and swarthy, like that of a toad, and the expression of her countenance was particularly evil. The man was somewhat younger, but of a figure equally wild; his frame was long and lathy, but his arms were remarkably short, his neck was rather bent, he squinted slightly, and his mouth was much awry; his complexion was dark, but, unlike that of the woman, it was more ruddy than livid; there was a deep scar on his cheek, something like the impression of a halfpenny. The dress was quite in keeping with the figure; in his hat, which was slightly peaked, was stuck a peacock's

feather; over a waistcoat of hide, untanned and with the hair upon it, he wore a rough jerkin of russet hue; small-clothes of leather, which had probably once belonged to a soldier, but with which pipe-clay did not seem to have come in contact for many a year, protected his lower man as far as the knees; his legs were cased in long stockings of blue worsted, and on his shoes he wore immense old-fashioned buckles. **U. S. 691571**

Such were the two beings who now came rushing upon me; the man was rather in advance, brandishing a ladle in his hand.

‘So I have caught you at last,’ said he; ‘I’ll teach ye, you young highwayman, to come skulking about my properties!’

Young as I was, I remarked that his manner of speaking was different from that of any people with whom I had been in the habit of associating. It was quite as strange as his appearance, and yet it nothing resembled the foreign English which I had been in the habit of hearing through the palisades of the prison; he could scarcely be a foreigner.

‘Your properties?’ said I; ‘I am in the King’s Lane. Why did you put them there, if you did not wish them to be seen?’

‘On the spy,’ said the woman, ‘hey? I’ll drown him in the sludge in the toad-pond over the hedge.’

‘So we will,’ said the man, ‘drown him anon in the mud!’

‘Drown me, will you?’ said I; ‘I should like to see you! What’s all this about? Was it because I saw you with your hands full of straw plait, and my mother there ——’

‘Yes,’ said the woman; ‘what was I about?’

Myself. How should I know? Making bad money, perhaps!

And it will be as well here to observe, that at this time there was much bad money in circulation in the neighbourhood, generally supposed to be fabricated by the prisoners, so that this false coin and straw plait formed the standard subjects of conversation at Norman Cross.

‘I’ll strangle thee!’ said the beldame, dashing at me. ‘Bad money, is it?’

‘Leave him to me, wifelkin,’ said the man, interposing; ‘you shall see how I’ll baste him down the lane.’

Myself. I tell you what, my chap, you had better put down that thing of yours; my father lies concealed within my tepid breast, and if to me you offer any harm or wrong, I’ll call him forth to help me with his forked tongue.

Man. What do you mean, ye Bengui’s bantling? I never heard such discourse in all my life: playman’s speech or Frenchmen’s talk — which, I wonder? Your father! tell the mumping villain that if he comes near my fire I’ll serve him out as I will you. Take that — Tiny Jehosaphat! what have we

got here? Oh, delicate Jehosaphat! what is the matter with the child?

I had made a motion which the viper understood; and now, partly disengaging itself from my bosom, where it had lain perdu, it raised its head to a level with my face, and stared upon my enemy with its glittering eyes.

The man stood like one transfixed, and the ladle with which he had aimed a blow at me now hung in the air like the hand which held it; his mouth was extended, and his cheeks became of a pale yellow, save alone that place which bore the mark which I have already described, and this shone now portentously, like fire. He stood in this manner for some time; at last the ladle fell from his hand, and its falling appeared to rouse him from his stupor.

‘I say, wifelkin,’ said he in a faltering tone, ‘did you ever see the like of this here?’

But the woman had retreated to the tent, from the entrance of which her loathly face was now thrust, with an expression partly of terror and partly of curiosity. After gazing some time longer at the viper and myself, the man stooped down and took up the ladle; then, as if somewhat more assured, he moved to the tent, where he entered into conversation with the beldame in a low voice. Of their discourse, though I could hear the greater part of it, I understood not a single word; and I wondered what it could be, for I knew by the sound

that it was not French. At last the man, in a somewhat louder tone, appeared to put a question to the woman, who nodded her head affirmatively, and in a moment or two produced a small stool, which she delivered to him. He placed it on the ground, close by the door of the tent, first rubbing it with his sleeve, as if for the purpose of polishing its surface.

Man. Now, my precious little gentleman, do sit down here by the poor people's tent; we wish to be civil in our slight way. Don't be angry, and say no; but look kindly upon us, and satisfied, my precious little God Almighty.

Woman. Yes, my gorgeous angel, sit down by the poor bodies' fire, and eat a sweetmeat. We want to ask you a question or two; only first put that serpent away.

Myself. I can sit down, and bid the serpent go to sleep, that's easy enough; but as for eating a sweetmeat, how can I do that? I have not got one, and where am I to get it?

Woman. Never fear, my tiny tawny, we can give you one, such as you never ate, I daresay, however far you may have come from.

The serpent sunk into his usual resting-place, and I sat down on the stool. The woman opened a box, and took out a strange little basket or hamper, not much larger than a man's fist, and formed of a delicate kind of matting. It was sewed at the top; but,

ripping it open with a knife, she held it to me, and I saw to my surprise, that it contained candied fruits of a dark-green hue, tempting enough to one of my age. 'There, my tiny,' said she; 'taste and tell me how you like them.'

'Very much,' said I; 'where did you get them?'

The beldame leered upon me for a moment, then, nodding her head thrice, with a knowing look, said, 'Who knows better than yourself, my tawny?'

Now, I knew nothing about the matter; but I saw that these strange people had conceived a very high opinion of the abilities of their visitor, which I was nothing loath to encourage. I therefore answered boldly, 'Ah! who indeed!'

'Certainly,' said the man; 'who should know better than yourself, or so well? And now, my tiny one, let me ask you one thing — you didn't come to do us any harm?'

'No,' said I, 'I had no dislike to you; though, if you were to meddle with me ——'

Man. Of course, my gorgeous, of course you would; and quite right too. Meddle with you! — what right have we? I should say, it would not be quite safe. I see how it is; you are one of them there; — and he bent his head towards his left shoulder.

Myself. Yes, I am one of them — for I thought he was alluding to the soldiers, — you had best mind what you are about, I can tell you.

Man. Don't doubt we will for our own sake; Lord bless you, wifelkin, only think that we should see one of them there when we least thought about it. Well, I have heard of such things, though I have never thought to see one; however, seeing is believing. Well! now you are come, and are not going to do us any mischief, I hope you will stay; you can do us plenty of good if you will.

Myself. What good can I do you?

Man. What good? plenty! Would you not bring us luck? I have heard say, that one of them there always does, if it will but settle down. Stay with us, you shall have a tilted cart all to yourself if you like. We'll make you our little God Almighty, and say our prayers to you every morning!

Myself. That would be nice; and if you were to give me plenty of these things, I should have no objection. But what would my father say? I think he would hardly let me.

Man. Why not? he would be with you; and kindly would we treat him. Indeed, without your father you would be nothing at all.

Myself. That's true; but I do not think he could be spared from his regiment. I have heard him say that they could do nothing without him.

Man. His regiment! What are you talking about? — what does the child mean?

Myself. What do I mean? — why, that my father is an officer-man at the barracks yonder, keeping guard over the French prisoners.

Man. Oh! then that sap is not your father?

Myself. What, the snake? Why, no! Did you think he was?

Man. To be sure we did. Didn't you tell me so?

Myself. Why, yes; but who would have thought you would have believed it? It is a tame one. I hunt vipers and tame them.

Man. O—h!

'O—h !' grunted the woman, 'that's it, is it?'

The man and woman, who during this conversation had resumed their former positions within the tent, looked at each other with a queer look of surprise, as if somewhat disconcerted at what they now heard. They then entered into discourse with each other in the same strange tongue which had already puzzled me. At length the man looked me in the face, and said, somewhat hesitatingly, 'So you are not one of them there, after all?'

Myself. One of them there? I don't know what you mean.

Man. Why, we have been thinking you were a goblin — a devilkin! However, I see how it is: you are a sap-engro, a chap who catches snakes, and plays tricks with them! Well, it comes very nearly to the same thing; and if you please to list with us, and bear us pleasant company, we shall be glad of you. I'd take my oath upon it that we might make a mort of money by you and that sap, and the tricks it could do; and, as you seem fly to everything, I

shouldn't wonder if you would make a prime hand at telling fortunes.

'I shouldn't wonder,' said I.

Man. Of course. And you might still be our God Almighty, or at any rate our clergyman, so you should live in a tilted cart by yourself, and say prayers to us night and morning — to wifelkin here, and all our family; there's plenty of us when we are all together: as I said before, you seem fly, I shouldn't wonder if you could read?

'Oh, yes!' said I, 'I can read'; and eager to display my accomplishments, I took my book out of my pocket, and, opening it at random, proceeded to read how a certain man, whilst wandering about a certain solitary island, entered a cave, the mouth of which was overgrown with brushwood, and how he was nearly frightened to death in that cave by something which he saw.

'That will do,' said the man; 'that's the kind of prayers for me and my family, ar'n't they, wifelkin? I never heard more delicate prayers in all my life! Why, they beat the rubricals hollow! — and here comes my son Jasper. I say, Jasper, here's a young sap-engro that can read, and is more fly than yourself. Shake hands with him; I wish ye to be two brothers.'

With a swift but stealthy pace Jasper came towards us from the farther part of the lane; on reaching the tent he stood still, and looked fixedly upon

me as I sat upon the stool; I looked fixedly upon him. A queer look had Jasper; he was a lad of some twelve or thirteen years, with long arms, unlike the singular being who called himself his father; his complexion was ruddy, but his face was seamed, though it did not bear the peculiar scar which disfigured the countenance of the other; nor, though roguish enough, a certain evil expression which that of the other bore, and which the face of the woman possessed in a yet more remarkable degree. For the rest, he wore drab breeches, with certain strings at the knee, a rather gay waistcoat, and tolerably white shirt; under his arm he bore a mighty whip of whalebone with a brass knob, and upon his head was a hat without either top or brim.

‘There, Jasper! shake hands with the sap-engro.’

‘Can he box, father?’ said Jasper, surveying me rather contemptuously. ‘I should think not, he looks so puny and small.’

‘Hold your peace, fool!’ said the man; ‘he can do more than that — I tell you he’s fly: he carries a sap about, which would sting a ninny like you to death.’

‘What, a sap-engro!’ said the boy, with a singular whine, and, stooping down, he leered curiously in my face, kindly, however, and then patted me on the head. ‘A sap-engro,’ he ejaculated; ‘lor!’

‘Yes, one of the right sort,’ said the man; ‘I am glad we have met with him, he is going to list with

us, and be our clergyman and God Almighty, ar'n't you, my tawny?'

'I don't know,' said I; 'I must see what my father will say.'

'Your father; bah!' — but here he stopped, for a sound was heard like the rapid galloping of a horse, not loud and distinct as on the road, but dull and heavy as if upon a grass sward; nearer and nearer it came, and the man, starting up, rushed out of the tent, and looked around anxiously. I arose from the stool upon which I had been seated, and just at that moment, amidst a crashing of boughs and sticks; a man on horseback bounded over the hedge into the lane at a few yards' distance from where we were: from the impetus of the leap the horse was nearly down on his knees; the rider, however, by dint of vigorous handling of the reins, prevented him from falling, and then rode up to the tent. "'Tis Nat,' said the man; 'what brings him here?' The new-comer was a stout burly fellow, about the middle-age; he had a savage, determined look, and his face was nearly covered over with carbuncles; he wore a broad slouching hat, and was dressed in a grey coat, cut in a fashion which I afterwards learnt to be the genuine Newmarket cut, the skirts being exceedingly short; his waistcoat was of red plush, and he wore broad corduroy breeches and white top-boots. The steed which carried him was of iron grey, spirited and powerful, but covered with sweat and foam.

The fellow glanced fiercely and suspiciously around, and said something to the man of the tent in a harsh and rapid voice. A short and hurried conversation ensued in the strange tongue. I could not take my eyes off this new-comer.

But the lane, the lane, all was now confusion in the lane; the man and woman were employed in striking the tents and in making hurried preparations for departure; the boy Jasper was putting the harness upon the ponies and attaching them to the carts; and, to increase the singularity of the scene, two or three wild-looking women and girls, in red cloaks and immense black beaver bonnets, came from I know not what direction, and, after exchanging a few words with the others, commenced with fierce and agitated gestures to assist them in their occupation. The rider meanwhile sat upon his horse, but evidently in a state of great impatience; he muttered curses between his teeth, spurred the animal furiously, and then reined it in, causing it to rear itself up nearly perpendicular. At last he said, 'Curse ye, for Romans, how slow ye are! well, it is no business of mine, stay here all day if you like; I have given ye warning, I am off to the big north road. However, before I go, you had better give me all you have of that.'

'Truly spoken, Nat, my pal,' said the man; 'give it him, mother. There it is; now be off as soon as you please, and rid us of evil company.'

The woman had handed him two bags formed of stocking, half full of something heavy, which looked through them for all the world like money of some kind. The fellow, on receiving them, thrust them without ceremony into the pockets of his coat, and then, without a word of farewell salutation, departed at a tremendous rate, the hoofs of his horse thundering for a long time on the hard soil of the neighbouring road, till the sound finally died away in the distance. The strange people were not slow in completing their preparations, and then, flogging their animals terrifically, hurried away seemingly in the same direction.

The boy Jasper was last of the band. As he was following the rest, he stopped suddenly, and looked on the ground appearing to muse; then, turning round, he came up to me where I was standing, leered in my face, and then, thrusting out his hand, he said, 'Good-bye, Sap, I daresay we shall meet again, remember we are brothers; two gentle brothers.'

Then whining forth, 'What a sap-engro, lor!' he gave me a parting leer, and hastened away.

I remained standing in the lane gazing after the retreating company. 'A strange set of people,' said I at last, 'I wonder who they can be.'

CHAPTER VI

YEARS passed on, even three years; during this period I had increased considerably in stature and in strength, and, let us hope, improved in mind; for I had entered on the study of the Latin language. The very first person to whose care I was intrusted for the acquisition of Latin was an old friend of my father's, a clergyman who kept a seminary at a town the very next we visited after our departure from 'the Cross.' Under his instruction, however, I continued only a few weeks, as we speedily left the place. 'Captain,' said this divine, when my father came to take leave of him on the eve of our departure, 'I have a friendship for you, and therefore wish to give you a piece of advice concerning this son of yours. You are now removing him from my care; you do wrong, but we will let that pass. Listen to me: there is but one good schoolbook in the world — the one I use in my seminary — Lilly's Latin Grammar, in which your son has already made some progress. If you are anxious for the success of your son in life, for the correctness of his conduct and the soundness of his principles, keep him to Lilly's Grammar. If you can by any means, either fair or foul, induce him to get by heart Lilly's Latin Grammar, you may set your heart at rest

with respect to him; I, myself, will be his warrant. I never yet knew a boy that was induced, either by fair means or foul, to learn Lilly's Latin Grammar by heart, who did not turn out a man, provided he lived long enough.'

My father, who did not understand the classical languages, received with respect the advice of his old friend, and from that moment conceived the highest opinion of Lilly's Latin Grammar. During three years I studied Lilly's Latin Grammar under the tuition of various schoolmasters, for I travelled with the regiment, and in every town in which we were stationary I was invariably (God bless my father!) sent to the classical academy of the place. It chanced, by good fortune, that in the generality of these schools the grammar of Lilly was in use; when, however, that was not the case, it made no difference in my educational course, my father always stipulating with the masters that I should be daily examined in Lilly. At the end of the three years I had the whole by heart; you had only to repeat the first two or three words of any sentence in any part of the book, and forthwith I would open cry, commencing without blundering and hesitation, and continue till you were glad to beg me to leave off, with many expressions of admiration at my proficiency in the Latin language. Sometimes, however, to convince you how well I merited these encomiums, I would follow you to the bottom of the

stair, and even into the street, repeating in a kind of sing-song measure the sonorous lines of the golden schoolmaster. If I am here asked whether I understood anything of what I had got by heart, I reply: 'Never mind, I understand it all now, and believe that no one ever yet got Lilly's Latin Grammar by heart when young, who repented of the feat at a mature age.'

And when my father saw that I had accomplished my task, he opened his mouth, and said, 'Truly, this is more than I expected. I did not think that there had been so much in you, either of application or capacity; you have now learnt all that is necessary, if my friend Dr. B——'s opinion was sterling, as I have no doubt it was. You are still a child, however, and must yet go to school, in order that you may be kept out of evil company. Perhaps you may still contrive, now you have exhausted the barn, to pick up a grain or two in the barn-yard. You are still ignorant of figures, I believe — not that I would mention figures in the same day with Lilly's Grammar.'

These words were uttered in a place called —, in the north, or in the road to the north, to which, for some time past, our corps had been slowly advancing. I was sent to the school of the place, which chanced to be a day-school. It was a somewhat extraordinary one, and a somewhat extraordinary event occurred to me within its walls.

It occupied part of the farther end of a small plain, or square, at the outskirts of the town, close to some extensive bleaching fields. It was a long low building of one room, with no upper story; on top was a kind of wooden box, or sconce, which I at first mistook for a pigeon-house, but which in reality contained a bell, to which was attached a rope, which, passing through the ceiling, hung dangling in the middle of the schoolroom. I am the more particular in mentioning this appurtenance, as I had soon occasion to scrape acquaintance with it in a manner not very agreeable to my feelings. The master was very proud of his bell, if I might judge from the fact of his eyes being frequently turned to that part of the ceiling from which the rope depended. Twice every day, namely, after the morning and evening tasks had been gone through, were the boys rung out of school by the monotonous jingle of this bell. This ringing out was rather a lengthy affair, for, as the master was a man of order and method, the boys were only permitted to go out of the room one by one; and as they were rather numerous, amounting, at least, to one hundred, and were taught to move at a pace of suitable decorum, at least a quarter of an hour elapsed from the commencement of the march before the last boy could make his exit. The office of bell-ringer was performed by every boy successively; and it so happened that, the very first day of my attendance at

the school, the turn to ring the bell had, by order of succession, arrived at the place which had been allotted to me; for the master, as I have already observed, was a man of method and order, and every boy had a particular seat, to which he became a fixture as long as he continued at the school.

So, upon this day, when the tasks were done and completed, and the boys sat with their hats and caps in their hands, anxiously expecting the moment of dismissal, it was suddenly notified to me, by the urchins who sat nearest to me, that I must get up and ring the bell. Now, as this was the first time that I had been at the school, I was totally unacquainted with the process, which I had never seen, and, indeed, had never heard of till that moment. I therefore sat still, not imagining it possible that any such duty could be required of me. But now, with not a little confusion, I perceived that the eyes of all the boys in the school were fixed upon me. Presently there were nods and winks in the direction of the bell-rope; and, as these produced no effect, uncouth visages were made, like those of monkeys when enraged; teeth were gnashed, tongues thrust out, and even fists were bent at me. The master, who stood at the end of the room, with a huge ferule under his arm, bent full upon me a look of stern appeal; and the ushers, of whom there were four, glared upon me, each from his own par-

ticular corner, as I vainly turned, in one direction and another, in search of one reassuring look.

But now, probably in obedience to a sign from the master, the boys in my immediate neighbourhood began to maltreat me. Some pinched me with their fingers, some buffeted me, whilst others pricked me with pins, or the points of compasses. These arguments were not without effect. I sprang from my seat, and endeavoured to escape along a double line of benches, thronged with boys of all ages, from the urchin of six or seven, to the non-descript of sixteen or seventeen. It was like running the gauntlet; every one, great or small, pinching, kicking, or otherwise maltreating me as I passed by.

Goaded on in this manner, I at length reached the middle of the room, where dangled the bell-rope, the cause of all my sufferings. I should have passed it — for my confusion was so great, that I was quite at a loss to comprehend what all this could mean, and almost believed myself under the influence of an ugly dream — but now the boys, who were seated in advance in the row, arose with one accord, and barred my farther progress; and one, doubtless more sensible than the rest, seizing the rope, thrust it into my hand. I now began to see that the dismissal of the school, and my own release from torment, depended upon this self-same rope. I therefore, in a fit of desperation, pulled it once or twice, and then left off, naturally supposing

that I had done quite enough. The boys who sat next the door, no sooner heard the bell, than rising from their seats, they moved out at the door. The bell, however, had no sooner ceased to jingle, than they stopped short, and, turning round, stared at the master, as much as to say, 'What are we to do now?' This was too much for the patience of the man of method, which my previous stupidity had already nearly exhausted. Dashing forward into the middle of the room, he struck me violently on the shoulders with his ferule, and snatching the rope out of my hand, exclaimed, with a stentorian voice, and genuine Yorkshire accent, 'Prodigy of ignorance! dost not even know how to ring a bell? Must I myself instruct thee?' He then commenced pulling at the bell with such violence, that long before half the school was dismissed the rope broke, and the rest of the boys had to depart without their accustomed music.

But I must not linger here, though I could say much about the school and the pedagogue highly amusing and diverting, which, however, I suppress, in order to make way for matters of yet greater interest.

On we went, northward, northward! and, as we advanced, I saw that the country was becoming widely different from those parts of merry England in which we had previously travelled. It was wilder, and less cultivated, and more broken with hills and

hillocks. The people, too, of these regions appeared to partake of something of the character of their country. They were coarsely dressed; tall and sturdy of frame; their voices were deep and guttural and the half of the dialect which they spoke was unintelligible to my ears.

CHAPTER VII

It was not long before we found ourselves at Edinburgh, or rather in the castle, into which the regiment marched with drums beating, colours flying, and a long train of baggage-waggons behind. The castle was, as I suppose it is now, a garrison for soldiers. Two other regiments were already there; the one an Irish, if I remember right, the other a small Highland corps.

It is hardly necessary to say much about this castle, which everybody has seen; on which account, doubtless, nobody has ever yet thought fit to describe it — at least that I am aware. Be this as it may, I have no intention of describing it, and shall content myself with observing, that we took up our abode in that immense building, or caserne, of modern erection, which occupies the entire eastern side of the bold rock on which the castle stands. A gallant caserne it was — the best and roomiest that I had hitherto seen — rather cold and windy, it is true, especially in the winter, but commanding a noble prospect of a range of distant hills, which I was told were ‘the hieland hills,’ and of a broad arm of the sea, which I heard somebody say was the Firth of Forth.

My brother, who, for some years past, had been

receiving his education in a certain celebrated school in England, was now with us; and it came to pass, that one day my father, as he sat at table, looked steadfastly on my brother and myself, and then addressed my mother: ‘During my journey down hither I have lost no opportunity of making inquiries about these people, the Scotch, amongst whom we now are, and since I have been here I have observed them attentively. From what I have heard and seen, I should say that upon the whole they are a very decent set of people; they seem acute and intelligent, and I am told that their system of education is so excellent, that every person is learned — more or less acquainted with Greek and Latin. There is one thing, however, connected with them which is a great drawback — the horrid jargon which they speak. However learned they may be in Greek and Latin, their English is execrable; and yet I’m told it is not so bad as it was. I was in company the other day with an Englishman who has resided here many years. We were talking about the country and the people. “I should like both very well,” said I, “were it not for the language. I wish sincerely our Parliament, which is passing so many foolish acts every year, would pass one to force these Scotch to speak English.” “I wish so, too,” said he. “The language is a disgrace to the British Government; but, if you had heard it twenty years ago, captain! — if you had heard it

as it was spoken when I first came to Edinburgh!””

‘Only custom,’ said my mother. ‘I daresay the language is now what it was then.’

‘I don’t know,’ said my father; ‘though I daresay you are right; it could never have been worse than it is at present. But now to the point. Were it not for the language, which, if the boys were to pick it up, might ruin their prospects in life — were it not for that, I should very much like to send them to a school there is in this place, which everybody talks about — the High School, I think they call it. ’Tis said to be the best school in the whole island; but the idea of one’s children speaking Scotch — broad Scotch! I must think the matter over.’

And he did think the matter over; and the result of his deliberation was a determination to send us to the school.

And in this school I began to construe the Latin language, which I had never done before, notwithstanding my long and diligent study of Lilly, which illustrious grammar was not used at Edinburgh, nor indeed known. Greek was only taught in the fifth or highest class, in which my brother was; as for myself, I never got beyond the third during the two years that I remained at this seminary. I certainly acquired here a considerable insight in the Latin tongue; and, to the scandal of my father and horror of my mother, a thorough proficiency in the

Scotch, which in less than two months usurped the place of the English, and so obstinately maintained its ground, that I still can occasionally detect its lingering remains. I did not spend my time unpleasantly at this school, though, first of all, I had to pass through an ordeal.

‘Scotland is a better country than England,’ said an ugly, blear-eyed lad, about a head and shoulders taller than myself, the leader of a gang of varlets who surrounded me in the play-ground, on the first day, as soon as the morning lesson was over. ‘Scotland is a far better country than England, in every respect.’

‘Is it?’ said I. ‘Then you ought to be very thankful for not having been born in England.’

‘That’s just what I am, ye loon; and every morning when I say my prayers, I thank God for not being an Englishman. The Scotch are a much better and braver people than the English.’

‘It may be so,’ said I, ‘for what I know — indeed, till I came here, I never heard a word either about the Scotch or their country.’

‘Are ye making fun of us, ye English puppy?’ said the blear-eyed lad; ‘take that!’ and I was presently beaten black-and-blue. And thus did I first become aware of the difference of races and their antipathy to each other.

‘Bow to the storm, and it shall pass over you.’ I held my peace, and silently submitted to the superi-

ority of the Scotch — *in numbers*. This was enough; from an object of persecution I soon became one of patronage, especially amongst the champions of the class. ‘The English,’ said the blear-eyed lad, ‘though a wee bit behind the Scotch in strength and fortitude, are nae to be sneezed at, being far ahead of the Irish, to say nothing of the French, a pack of cowardly scoundrels. And with regard to the English country, it is na Scotland, it is true, but it has its gude properties; and though there is ne’er a haggis in a’ the land, there’s an unco deal o’ gowd and siller. I respect England, for I have an auntie married there.’

Anything served them, that is, the urchins, as a pretence for a fray, or, Dorically speaking, a *bicker*; every street and close was at feud with its neighbour; the lads of the school were at feud with the young men of the college, whom they pelted in winter with snow, and in summer with stones; and then the feud between the Old and New Town!

One day I was standing on the ramparts of the castle on the south-western side which overhangs the green brae, where it slopes down into what was in those days the green swamp or morass, called by the natives of Auld Reekie the Nor Loch; it was a dark gloomy day, and a thin veil of mist was beginning to settle down upon the brae and the morass. I could perceive, however, that there was a skirmish taking place in the latter spot. I had an indistinct

view of two parties — apparently of urchins — and I heard whoops and shrill cries: eager to know the cause of this disturbance, I left the castle, and descending the brae reached the borders of the morass, where was a runnel of water and the remains of an old wall, on the other side of which a narrow path led across the swamp: upon this path at a little distance before me there was ‘a bicker.’ I pushed forward, but had scarcely crossed the ruined wall and runnel, when the party nearest to me gave way, and in great confusion came running in my direction. As they drew nigh, one of them shouted to me, ‘Wha are ye, mon? are ye o’ the Auld Toon?’ I made no answer. ‘Ha, ye are o’ the New Toon; de’il tak’ ye, we’ll moorder ye!’ and the next moment a huge stone sung past my head. ‘Let me be, ye fule bodies,’ said I, ‘I’m no of either of ye, I live yonder aboon in the castle.’ ‘Ah! ye live in the castle; then ye’re an Auld-Tooner; come gi’e us your help, man, and dinna stand there staring like a dunnot, we want help sair eneugh. Here are stanes.’

For my own part I wished for nothing better, and, rushing forward, I placed myself at the head of my new associates, and commenced flinging stones fast and desperately. The other party now gave way in their turn, closely followed by ourselves; I was in the van, and about to stretch out my hand to seize the hindermost boy of the enemy, when, not being acquainted with the miry and difficult paths of the

Nor Loch, and in my eagerness taking no heed of my footing, I plunged into a quagmire, into which I sank as far as my shoulders. Our adversaries no sooner perceived this disaster than, setting up a shout, they wheeled round and attacked us most vehemently. Had my comrades now deserted me my life had not been worth a straw's purchase, I should either have been smothered in the quag, or, what is more probable, had my brains beaten out with stones; but they behaved like true Scots, and fought stoutly around their comrade, until I was extricated, whereupon both parties retired, the night being near at hand.

‘Ye are na a bad hand at flinging stanes,’ said the lad who first addressed me, as we now returned up the brae; ‘your aim is right dangerous, mon, I saw how ye skelpit them; ye maun help us agin thae New Toon blackguards at our next bicker.’

So to the next bicker I went, and to many more, which speedily followed as the summer advanced; the party to which I had given my help on the first occasion consisted merely of outliers, posted about half-way up the hill, for the purpose of overlooking the movements of the enemy.

Did the latter draw nigh in any considerable force messengers were forthwith despatched to the ‘Auld Toon,’ especially to the filthy alleys and closes of the High Street, which forthwith would disgorge swarms of bare-headed and bare-footed

'callants,' who, with gestures wild and 'eldrich screech and hollo,' might frequently be seen pouring down the sides of the hill. I have seen upwards of a thousand engaged on either side in these frays, which I have no doubt were full as desperate as the fights described in the Iliad, and which were certainly much more bloody than the combats of modern Greece in the war of independence: the callants not only employed their hands in hurling stones, but not unfrequently slings, at the use of which they were very expert, and which occasionally dislodged teeth, shattered jaws, or knocked out an eye. Our opponents certainly laboured under considerable disadvantage, being compelled not only to wade across a deceitful bog, but likewise to clamber up part of a steep hill before they could attack us; nevertheless, their determination was such, and such their impetuosity, that we had sometimes difficulty enough to maintain our own. I shall never forget one bicker, the last indeed which occurred at that time, as the authorities of the town, alarmed by the desperation of its character, stationed forthwith a body of police on the hillside, to prevent, in future, any such breaches of the peace.

It was a beautiful Sunday evening, the rays of the descending sun were reflected redly from the grey walls of the castle, and from the black rocks on which it was founded. The bicker had long since commenced, stones from sling and hand were flying;

but the callants of the New Town were now carrying everything before them.

A full-grown baker's apprentice was at their head; he was foaming with rage, and had taken the field, as I was told, in order to avenge his brother, whose eye had been knocked out in one of the late bickers. He was no slinger or flinger, but brandished in his right hand the spoke of a cartwheel, like my countryman Tom Hickathrift of old in his encounter with the giant of the Lincolnshire fen. Protected by a piece of wickerwork attached to his left arm, he rushed on to the fray, disregarding the stones which were showered against him, and was ably seconded by his followers. Our own party was chased half way up the hill, where I was struck to the ground by the baker, after having been foiled in an attempt which I had made to fling a handful of earth into his eyes. All now appeared lost, the Auld Toon was in full retreat. I myself lay at the baker's feet, who had just raised his spoke, probably to give me the *coup de grace*, — it was an awful moment. Just then I heard a shout and a rushing sound; a wild-looking figure is descending the hill with terrible bounds; it is a lad of some fifteen years; he is bare-headed, and his red uncombed hair stands on end like hedgehogs' bristles; his frame is lithy, like that of an antelope, but he has prodigious breadth of chest; he wears a military undress, that of the regiment, even of a drummer, for it

is wild Davy, whom a month before I had seen enlisted on Leith Links to serve King George with drum and drumstick as long as his services might be required, and who, ere a week had elapsed, had smitten with his fist Drum-Major Elzigood, who, incensed at his inaptitude, had threatened him with his cane; he has been in confinement for weeks, this is the first day of his liberation, and he is now descending the hill with horrid bounds and shoutings; he is now about five yards distant, and the baker, who apprehends that something dangerous is at hand, prepares himself for the encounter; but what avails the strength of a baker, even full-grown? — what avails the defence of a wicker shield? what avails the wheel spoke, should there be an opportunity of using it, against the impetus of an avalanche or a cannon ball? — for to either of these might that wild figure be compared, which, at the distance of five yards, sprang at once, with head, hands, feet and body, all together, upon the champion of the New Town, tumbling him to the earth amain. And now it was the turn of the Old Town to triumph. Our late discomfited host returning on its steps, overwhelmed the fallen champion with blows of every kind, and then, led on by his vanquisher, who had assumed his arms, namely, the wheel spoke and wicker shield, fairly cleared the brae of their adversaries, whom they drove down headlong into the morass.

CHAPTER VIII

ONWARD, onward! and after we had sojourned in Scotland nearly two years, the long Continental war had been brought to an end, Napoleon was humbled for a time, and the Bourbons restored to a land which could well have dispensed with them; we returned to England, where the corps was disbanded, and my parents with their family retired to private life. I shall pass over in silence the events of a year, which offer little of interest as far as connected with me and mine. Suddenly, however, the sound of war was heard again. 'Napoleon had broken forth from Elba, and everything was in confusion. Vast military preparations were again made, our own corps was levied anew, and my brother became an officer in it; but the danger was soon over, Napoleon was once more quelled, and chained for ever, like Prometheus, to his rock. As the corps, however, though so recently levied, had already become a very fine one, thanks to my father's energetic drilling, the government very properly determined to turn it to some account, and, as disturbances were apprehended in Ireland about this period, it occurred to them that they could do no better than despatch it to that country.

In the autumn of the year 1815 we set sail from a

port in Essex; we were some eight hundred strong, and were embarked in two ships, very large, but old and crazy; a storm overtook us when off Beachy Head, in which we had nearly foundered. I was awakened early in the morning by the howling of the wind and the uproar on deck. I kept myself close, however, as is still my constant practice on similar occasions, and waited the result with that apathy and indifference which violent sea sickness is sure to produce. We shipped several seas, and once the vessel missing stays — which, to do it justice, it generally did at every third or fourth tack — we escaped almost by a miracle from being dashed upon the foreland. On the eighth day of our voyage we were in sight of Ireland. The weather was now calm and serene, the sun shone brightly on the sea and on certain green hills in the distance, on which I descried what at first sight I believed to be two ladies gathering flowers, which, however, on our nearer approach, proved to be two tall white towers, doubtless built for some purpose or other, though I did not learn for what.

We entered a kind of bay, or cove, by a narrow inlet; it was a beautiful and romantic place this cove, very spacious, and being nearly landlocked, was sheltered from every wind. A small island, every inch of which was covered with fortifications, appeared to swim upon the waters, whose dark blue denoted their immense depth; tall green hills, which

ascended gradually from the shore, formed the background to the west; they were carpeted to the top with turf of the most vivid green, and studded here and there with woods, seemingly of oak; there was a strange old castle half way up the ascent, a village on a crag — but the mists of the morning were half veiling the scene when I surveyed it, and the mists of time are now hanging densely between it and my no longer youthful eye; I may not describe it; — nor will I try.

Leaving the ship in the cove, we passed up a wide river in boats till we came to a city, where we disembarked. It was a large city, as large as Edinburgh to my eyes; there were plenty of fine houses, but little neatness; the streets were full of impurities; handsome equipages rolled along, but the greater part of the population were in rags; beggars abounded; there was no lack of merriment, however; boisterous shouts of laughter were heard on every side. It appeared a city of contradictions. After a few days' rest we marched from this place in two divisions. My father commanded the second, I walked by his side.

Our route lay up the country; the country at first offered no very remarkable feature; it was pretty, but tame. On the second day, however, its appearance had altered, it had become more wild; a range of distant mountains bounded the horizon. We passed through several villages, as I suppose I

may term them, of low huts, the walls formed of rough stones without mortar, the roof of flags laid over wattles and wicker work; they seemed to be inhabited solely by women and children; the latter were naked, the former, in general, blear-eyed bel-dames, who sat beside the doors on low stools, spinning. We saw, however, both men and women working at a distance in the fields.

I was thirsty; and going up to an ancient crone, employed in the manner which I have described, I asked her for water; she looked me in the face, appeared to consider for a moment, then tottering into her hut, presently reappeared with a small pipkin of milk, which she offered to me with a trembling hand. I drank the milk; it was sour, but I found it highly refreshing. I then took out a penny and offered it to her, whereupon she shook her head, smiled, and, patting my face with her skinny hand, murmured some words in a tongue which I had never heard before.

I walked on by my father's side, holding the stirrup-leather of his horse; presently several low uncouth cars passed by, drawn by starved cattle; the drivers were tall fellows, with dark features and athletic frames — they wore long loose blue cloaks with sleeves, which last, however, dangled unoccupied; these cloaks appeared in tolerably good condition, not so their under garments. On their heads were broad slouching hats; the generality of them

were bare-footed. As they passed, the soldiers jested with them in the patois of East Anglia, where-upon the fellows laughed, and appeared to jest with the soldiers; but what they said who knows, it being in a rough guttural language, strange and wild. The soldiers stared at each other, and were silent.

‘A strange language that!’ said a young officer to my father; ‘I don’t understand a word of it; what can it be?’

‘Irish,’ said my father, with a loud voice, ‘and a bad language it is; I have known it of old, that is, I have often heard it spoken when I was a guardsman in London. There’s one part of London where all the Irish live — at least all the worst of them — and there they hatch their villainies to speak this tongue; it is that which keeps them together and makes them dangerous: I was once sent there to seize a couple of deserters — Irish — who had taken refuge amongst their companions; we found them in what was in my time called a ken, that is, a house where only thieves and desperadoes are to be found. Knowing on what kind of business I was bound, I had taken with me a sergeant’s party; it was well I did so. We found the deserters in a large room, with at least thirty ruffians, horrid-looking fellows, seated about a long table, drinking, swearing, and talking Irish. Ah! we had a tough battle, I remember; the two fellows did nothing, but sat still, thinking it best to be quiet; but the rest, with an

ubbubboo like the blowing up of a powder magazine, sprang up, brandishing their sticks; for these fellows always carry sticks with them, even to bed, and not unfrequently spring up in their sleep, striking left and right.'

'Did you take the deserters?' said the officer.

'Yes,' said my father; 'for we formed at the end of the room, and charged with fixed bayonets, which compelled the others to yield, notwithstanding their numbers; but the worst was when we got out into the street; the whole district had become alarmed, and hundreds came pouring down upon us — men, women, and children. Women, did I say! — they looked like fiends, half naked, with their hair hanging down over their bosoms; they tore up the very pavement to hurl at us, sticks rang about our ears, stones, and Irish — I liked the Irish worst of all, it sounded so horrid, especially as I did not understand it. It's a bad language.'

'A queer tongue,' said I, 'I wonder if I could learn it?'

'Learn it!' said my father; 'what should you learn it for? — however, I am not afraid of that. It is not like Scotch, no person can learn it, save those who are born in it, and even in Ireland the respectable people do not speak it, only the wilder sort, like those we have passed.'

Within a day or two we had reached a tall range of mountains running north and south, which I was

told were those of Tipperary; along the skirts of these we proceeded till we came to a town, the principal one of these regions. It was on the bank of a beautiful river, which separated it from the mountains. It was rather an ancient place, and might contain some ten thousand inhabitants — I found that it was our destination; there were extensive barracks at the farther end, in which the corps took up its quarters; with respect to ourselves, we took lodgings in a house which stood in the principal street.

We continued at this place for some months, during which time the soldiers performed their duties, whatever they were; and I, having no duties to perform, was sent to school. I had been to English schools, and to the celebrated one of Edinburgh; but my education, at the present day, would not be what it is — perfect, had I never had the honour of being *alumnus* in an Irish seminary.

‘Captain,’ said our kind host, ‘you would, no doubt, wish that the young gentleman should enjoy every advantage which the town may afford towards helping him on in the path of genteel learning. It’s a great pity that he should waste his time in idleness — doing nothing else than what he says he has been doing for the last fortnight — fishing in the river for trouts which he never catches; and wandering up the glen in the mountain, in search of the hips that grow there. Now, we have a school

here, where he can learn the most elegant Latin, and get an insight into the Greek letters, which is desirable; and where, moreover, he will have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of all the Protestant young gentlemen of the place, the handsome well-dressed young persons whom your honour sees in the church on Sundays, when your honour goes there in the morning, with the rest of the Protestant military; for it is no Papist school, though there may be a Papist or two there — a few poor farmers' sons from the country, with whom there is no necessity for your honour's child to form any acquaintance at all, at all!'

And to the school I went, where I read the Latin tongue and the Greek letters, with a nice old clergyman, who sat behind a black oaken desk, with a huge Elzevir Flaccus before him, in a long gloomy kind of hall, with a broken stone floor, the roof festooned with cobwebs, the walls considerably dilapidated, and covered over with strange figures and hieroglyphics, evidently produced by the application of burnt stick; and there I made acquaintance with the Protestant young gentlemen of the place, who, with whatever *éclat* they might appear at church on a Sunday, did assuredly not exhibit to much advantage in the schoolroom on the weekdays, either with respect to clothes or looks. And there I was in the habit of sitting on a large stone, before the roaring fire in a huge open chimney, and

entertaining certain of the Protestant young gentlemen of my own age, seated on similar stones, with extraordinary accounts of my own adventures, and those of the corps, with an occasional anecdote extracted from the story-books of Hickathrift and Wight Wallace, pretending to be conning the lesson all the while.

And there I made acquaintance, notwithstanding the hint of the landlord, with the Papist 'gasoons,' as they were called, the farmers' sons from the country; and of these gasoons, of which there were three, two might be reckoned as nothing at all; in the third, however, I soon discovered that there was something extraordinary.

He was about sixteen years old, and above six feet high, dressed in a grey suit; the coat, from its size, appeared to have been made for him some ten years before. He was remarkably narrow-chested and round-shouldered, owing, perhaps, as much to the tightness of his garment as to the hand of nature. His face was long, and his complexion swarthy, relieved, however, by certain freckles, with which the skin was plentifully studded. He had strange wandering eyes, grey, and somewhat unequal in size; they seldom rested on the book, but were generally wandering about the room, from one object to another. Sometimes he would fix them intently on the wall; and then suddenly starting, as if from a reverie, he would commence making certain mysterious

movements with his thumbs and forefingers, as if he were shuffling something from him.

One morning, as he sat by himself on a bench, engaged in this manner, I went up to him, and said, 'Good day, Murtagh; you do not seem to have much to do?'

'Faith, you may say that, Shorsha dear! — it is seldom much to do that I have.'

'And what are you doing with your hands?'

'Faith, then, if I must tell you, I was e'en dealing with the cards.'

'Do you play much at cards?'

'Sorra a game, Shorsha, have I played with the cards since my uncle Phelim, the thief, stole away the ould pack, when he went to settle in the county Waterford!'

'But you have other things to do?'

'Sorra anything else has Murtagh to do that he cares about; and that makes me dread so going home at nights.'

'I should like to know all about you; where do you live, joy?'

'Faith, then, ye shall know all about me, and where I live. It is at a place called the Wilderness that I live, and they call it so, because it is a fearful wild place, without any house near it but my father's own; and that's where I live when at home.'

'And your father is a farmer, I suppose?'

'You may say that; and it is a farmer I should

have been, like my brother Denis, had not my uncle Phelim, the thief! tould my father to send me to school, to learn Greek letters, that I might be made a saggart of, and sent to Paris and Salamanca.'

'And you would rather be a farmer than a priest?'

'You may say that! — for, were I a farmer, like the rest, I should have something to do, like the rest — something that I cared for — and I should come home tired at night, and fall asleep, as the rest do, before the fire; but when I comes home at night I am not tired, for I have been doing nothing all day that I care for; and then I sits down and stares about me, and at the fire, till I become frightened; and then I shouts to my brother Denis, or to the gasoons, "Get up, I say, and let's be doing something; tell us a tale of Finn-ma-Coul, and how he lay down in the Shannon's bed, and let the river flow down his jaws!" Arrah, Shorsha, I wish you would come and stay with us, and tell us some o' your sweet stories of your own self and the snake ye carried about wid ye. Faith, Shorsha dear! that snake bates anything about Finn-ma-Coul or Brian Boroo, the thieves two, bad luck to them!'

'And do they get up and tell you stories?'

'Sometimes they does, but oftenmost they curses me, and bids me be quiet! But I can't be quiet, either before the fire or abed; so I runs out of the house, and stares at the rocks, at the trees, and sometimes at the clouds, as they run a race across

the bright moon; and, the more I stares, the more frightened I grows, till I screeches and holloas. And last night I went into the barn, and hid my face in the straw; and there, as I lay and shivered in the straw, I heard a voice above my head singing out "To whit, to whoo!" and then up I starts, and runs into the house, and falls over my brother Denis, as he lies at the fire. "What's that for?" says he. "Get up, you thief!" says I, "and be helping me. I have been out in the barn, and an owl has crow'd at me!"

'And what has this to do with playing at cards?'

'Little eno'ugh, Shorsha dear! — If there were card-playing, I should not be frightened.'

'And why do you not play at cards?'

'Did I not tell you that the thief, my uncle Phe-
lim, stole away the pack? If we had the pack, my
brother Denis and the gasoons would be ready
enough to get up from their sleep before the fire,
and play cards with me for ha'pence, or eggs, or
nothing at all; but the pack is gone — bad luck to
the thief who took it!'

'And why don't you buy another?'

'Is it of buying you are speaking? And where am
I to get the money?'

'Ah! that's another thing!'

'Faith, it is, honey! — And now the Christmas
holidays is coming, when I shall be at home by day
as well as night, and then what am I to do? Since
I have been a-saggarting, I have been good for no-

thing at all — neither for work nor Greek — only to play cards! Faith, it's going mad I will be!

'I say, Murtagh!'

'Yes, Shorsha dear!'

'I have a pack of cards.'

'You don't say so, Shorsha ma vourneen? — you don't say that you have cards fifty-two?'

'I do, though; and they are quite new — never been once used.'

'And you'll be lending them to me, I warrant?'

'Don't think it! — But I'll sell them to you, joy, if you like.'

'Hanam mon Dioul! am I not after telling you that I have no money at all?'

'But you have as good as money, to me, at least; and I'll take it in exchange.'

'What's that, Shorsha dear?'

'Irish!'

'Irish?'

'Yes, you speak Irish; I heard you talking it the other day to the cripple. You shall teach me Irish.'

'And is it a language-master you'd be making of me?'

'To be sure! — what better can you do? — it would help you to pass your time at school. You can't learn Greek, so you must teach Irish!'

Before Christmas, Murtagh was playing at cards with his brother Denis, and I could speak a considerable quantity of broken Irish.

CHAPTER IX

WHEN Christmas was over, and the New Year commenced, we broke up our quarters, and marched away to Templemore. This was a large military station, situated in a wild and thinly inhabited country. Extensive bogs were in the neighbourhood, connected with the huge bog of Allan, the *Palus Mæotis* of Ireland. Here and there was seen a ruined castle looming through the mists of winter; whilst at the distance of seven miles, rose a singular mountain, exhibiting in its brow a chasm, or vacuum, just, for all the world, as if a piece had been bitten out; a feat which, according to the tradition of the country, had actually been performed by his Satanic majesty, who, after flying for some leagues with the morsel in his mouth, becoming weary, dropped it in the vicinity of Cashel, where it may now be seen in the shape of a bold bluff hill, crowned with the ruins of a stately edifice, probably built by some ancient Irish king.

We had been here only a few days, when my brother, who, as I have before observed, had become one of his Majesty's officers, was sent on a detachment to a village at about ten miles' distance. He was not sixteen, and, though three years older than myself, scarcely my equal in stature, for I had become tall and large-limbed for my age; but there



IN WILD IRELAND

was a spirit in him that would not have disgraced a general; and, nothing daunted at the considerable responsibility which he was about to incur, he marched sturdily out of the barrack-yard at the head of his party, consisting of twenty light-infantry men, and a tall grenadier sergeant, selected expressly by my father, for the soldier-like qualities which he possessed, to accompany his son on this his first expedition. So out of the barrack-yard, with something of an air, marched my dear brother, his single drum and fife playing the inspiring old melody,

‘Marlbrouk is gone to the wars,
He’ll never return no more!’

I soon missed my brother, for I was now alone, with no being, at all assimilating in age, with whom I could exchange a word. Of late years, from being almost constantly at school, I had cast aside, in a great degree, my unsocial habits and natural reserve, but in the desolate region in which we now were there was no school; and I felt doubly the loss of my brother, whom, moreover, I tenderly loved for his own sake. Books I had none, at least such ‘as I cared about’; and with respect to the old volume, the wonders of which had first beguiled me into common reading, I had so frequently pored over its pages, that I had almost got its contents by heart. I was therefore in danger of falling into the same predicament as Murtagh, becoming ‘frighted’

from having nothing to do! Nay, I had not even his resources; I cared not for cards, even if I possessed them, and could find people disposed to play with them. However, I made the most of circumstances, and roamed about the desolate fields and bogs in the neighbourhood, sometimes entering the cabins of the peasantry, with a 'God's blessing upon you, good people!' where I would take my seat on the 'stranger's stone' at the corner of the hearth, and, looking them full in the face, would listen to the carles and carlines talking Irish.

One morning I set out, designing to pay a visit to my brother, at the place where he was detached; the distance was rather considerable, yet I hoped to be back by evening fall, for I was now a shrewd walker, thanks to constant practice. I set out early, and, directing my course towards the north, I had in less than two hours accomplished considerably more than half of the journey. The weather had been propitious: a slight frost had rendered the ground firm to the tread, and the skies were clear; but now a change came over the scene, the skies darkened, and a heavy snow storm came on; the road then lay straight through a bog, and was bounded by a deep trench on both sides; I was making the best of my way, keeping as nearly as I could in the middle of the road, lest, blinded by the snow which was frequently borne into my eyes by the wind, I might fall into the dyke, when all at once I

heard a shout to windward, and turning my eyes I saw the figure of a man, and what appeared to be an animal of some kind, coming across the bog with great speed, in the direction of myself; the nature of the ground seemed to offer but little impediment to these beings, both clearing the holes and abysses which lay in their way with surprising agility; the animal was, however, some slight way in advance, and, bounding over the dyke, appeared on the road just before me. It was a dog, of what species I cannot tell, never having seen the like before or since; the head was large and round; the ears so tiny as scarcely to be discernible; the eyes of a fiery red; in size it was rather small than large; and the coat, which was remarkably smooth, as white as the falling flakes. It placed itself directly in my path, and showing its teeth, and bristling its coat, appeared determined to prevent my progress. I had an ashen stick in my hand, with which I threatened it; this, however, only served to increase its fury; it rushed upon me, and I had the utmost difficulty to preserve myself from its fangs.

‘What are you doing with the dog, the fairy dog?’ said a man, who at this time likewise cleared the dyke at a bound.

He was a very tall man, rather well dressed as it should seem; his garments, however, were like my own, so covered with snow that I could scarcely discern their quality.

‘What are you doing with the dog of peace?’

‘I wish he would show himself one,’ said I; ‘I said nothing to him, but he placed himself in my road, and would not let me pass.’

‘Of course he would not be letting you till he knew where ye were going.’

‘He’s not much of a fairy,’ said I, ‘or he would know that without asking; tell him that I am going to see my brother.’

‘And who is your brother, little Sas?’

‘What my father is, a royal soldier.’

‘Oh, ye are going then to the detachment at ——; by my shoul, I have a good mind to be spoiling your journey.’

‘You are doing that already,’ said I, ‘keeping me here talking about dogs and fairies; you had better go home and get some salve to cure that place over your eye; it’s catching cold you’ll be, in so much snow.’

On one side of the man’s forehead there was a raw and staring wound, as if from a recent and terrible blow.

‘Faith, then, I’ll be going, but it’s taking you wid me I will be.’

‘And where will you take me?’

‘Why, then, to Ryan’s Castle, little Sas.’

‘You do not speak the language very correctly,’ said I; ‘it is not Sas you should call me — ’tis Sassannach,’ and forthwith I accompanied the

word with a speech full of flowers of Irish rhetoric.

The man looked upon me for a moment, fixedly, then, bending his head towards his breast, he appeared to be undergoing a kind of convulsion, which was accompanied by a sound something resembling laughter; presently he looked at me, and there was a broad grin on his features.

‘By my shoul, it’s a thing of peace I’m thinking ye!’

But now with a whisking sound came running down the road a hare; it was nearly upon us before it perceived us; suddenly stopping short, however, it sprang into the bog on the right-hand side; after it amain bounded the dog of peace, followed by the man, but not until he had nodded to me a farewell salutation. In a few moments I lost sight of him amidst the snowflakes.

The weather was again clear and fine before I reached the place of detachment. It was a little wooden barrack, surrounded by a wall of the same material; a sentinel stood at the gate, I passed by him, and, entering the building, found myself in a rude kind of guard-room; several soldiers were lying asleep on a wooden bench at one end, others lounged on benches by the side of a turf fire. The tall sergeant stood before the fire, holding a cooking utensil in his left hand; on seeing me, he made the military salutation.

‘Is my brother here?’ said I, rather timidly, dreading to hear that he was out, perhaps for the day.

‘The ensign is in his room, sir,’ said Bagg. ‘I am now preparing his meal, which will presently be ready; you will find the ensign above stairs,’ and he pointed to a broken ladder which led to some place above.

And there I found him — the boy-soldier — in a kind of upper loft, so low that I could touch with my hands the sooty rafters; the floor was of rough boards, through the joints of which you could see the gleam of the soldiers’ fire, and occasionally discern their figures as they moved about; in one corner was a camp bedstead, by the side of which hung the child’s sword, gorget, and sash; a deal table stood in the proximity of the rusty grate, where smoked and smouldered a pile of black turf from the bog — a deal table without a piece of baize to cover it, yet fraught with things not devoid of interest; a Bible, given by a mother; the *Odyssey*, the Greek *Odyssey*; a flute, with broad silver keys; crayons, moreover, and water-colours; and a sketch of a wild prospect near, which, though not half finished, afforded ample proof of the excellence and skill of the boyish hand now occupied upon it.

‘You seem to be very comfortable, John,’ said I, looking around the room and at the various objects which I have described above: ‘you have a good

roof over your head, and have all your things about you.'

'Yes, I am very comfortable, George, in many respects; I am, moreover, independent, and feel myself a man for the first time in my life — independent did I say? — that's not the word, I am something much higher than that; here am I, not sixteen yet, a person in authority, like the centurion in the book there, with twenty Englishmen under me, worth a whole legion of his men, and that fine fellow Bagg to wait upon me, and take my orders. Oh! these last six weeks have passed like hours of heaven.'

'But your time must frequently hang heavy on your hands; this is a strange wild place, and you must be very solitary?'

'I am never solitary; I have, as you see, all my things about me, and there is plenty of company below-stairs. Not that I mix with the soldiers; if I did, good-bye to my authority; but when I am alone I can hear all their discourse through the planks, and I often laugh to myself at the funny things they say.'

'And have you any acquaintance here?'

'The very best; much better than the Colonel and the rest, at their grand Templemore; I had never so many in my whole life before. One has just left me, a gentleman who lives at a distance across the bog; he comes to talk with me about

Greek, and the *Odyssey*, for he is a very learned man, and understands the old Irish, and various other strange languages. He has had a dispute with Bagg. On hearing his name, he called him to him, and, after looking at him for some time with great curiosity, said that he was sure he was a Dane. Bagg, however, took the compliment in dudgeon, and said that he was no more a Dane than himself, but a true-born Englishman, and a sergeant of six years' standing.'

'And what other acquaintance have you?'

'All kinds; the whole neighbourhood can't make enough of me. Amongst others there's the clergyman of the parish and his family; such a venerable old man, such fine sons and daughters! I am treated by them like a son and brother — I might be always with them if I pleased; there's one drawback, however, in going to see them; there's a horrible creature in the house, a kind of tutor, whom they keep more from charity than anything else; he is a Papist and, they say, a priest; you should see him scowl sometimes at my red coat, for he hates the king, and not unfrequently, when the king's health is drunk, curses him between his teeth. I once got up to strike him; but the youngest of the sisters, who is the handsomest, caught my arm and pointed to her forehead.'

'And what does your duty consist of? Have you nothing else to do than pay visits and receive them?'

‘We do what is required of us, we guard this edifice, perform our evolutions, and help the excise; I am frequently called up in the dead of night to go to some wild place or other in quest of an illicit still; this last part of our duty is poor mean work, I don’t like it, nor more does Bagg; though without it, we should not see much active service, for the neighbourhood is quiet; save the poor creatures with their stills, not a soul is stirring. ’Tis true there’s Jerry Grant.’

‘And who is Jerry Grant?’

‘Did you never hear of him? that’s strange, the whole country is talking about him; he is a kind of outlaw, rebel, or robber, all three, I daresay; there’s a hundred pounds offered for his head.’

‘And where does he live?’

‘His proper home, they say, is in the Queen’s County, where he has a band, but he is a strange fellow, fond of wandering about by himself amidst the bogs and mountains, and living in the old castle; occasionally he quarters himself in the peasant’s houses, who let him do just what he pleases; he is free of his money, and often does them good turns, and can be good-humoured enough, so they don’t dislike him. Then he is what they call a fairy man, a person in league with fairies and spirits, and able to work much harm by supernatural means, on which account they hold him in great awe; he is, moreover, a mighty strong and tall fellow. Bagg has seen him.’

‘Has he?’

‘Yes! and felt him. He too is a strange one. A few days ago he was told that Grant had been seen hovering about an old castle some two miles off in the bog; so one afternoon what does he do but, without saying a word to me — for which, by the by, I ought to put him under arrest, though what I should do without Bagg I have no idea whatever — what does he do but walk off to the castle, intending, as I suppose, to pay a visit to Jerry. He had some difficulty in getting there on account of the turf-holes in the bog, which he was not accustomed to; however, thither at last he got and went in. It was a strange lonesome place, he says, and he did not much like the look of it; however, in he went, and searched about from the bottom to the top and down again, but could find no one; he shouted and hallooed, but nobody answered, save the rooks and choughs, which started up in great numbers. “I have lost my trouble,” said Bagg, and left the castle. It was now late in the afternoon, near sunset, when about halfway over the bog he met a man ——’,

‘And that man was ——’

‘Jerry Grant! there’s no doubt of it. Bagg says it was the most sudden thing in the world. He was moving along, making the best of his way, thinking of nothing at all save a public-house at Swanton-Morley, which he intends to take when he gets home and the regiment is disbanded — though I

hope that will not be for some time yet: he had just leaped a turf-hole, and was moving on, when, at a distance of six yards before him, he saw a fellow coming straight towards him. Bagg says that he stopped short as suddenly as if he had heard the word halt when marching at double quick time. It was quite a surprise, he says, and he can't imagine how the fellow was so close upon him before he was aware. He was an immense tall fellow — Bagg thinks at least two inches taller than himself — very well dressed in a blue coat and buff breeches, for all the world like a squire when going out hunting. Bagg, however, saw at once that he had a roguish air, and he was on his guard in a moment. "Good-evening to ye, sodger," says the fellow, stepping close up to Bagg, and staring him in the face. "Good-evening to you, sir! I hope you are well," says Bagg. "You are looking after some one?" says the fellow. "Just so, sir," says Bagg, and forthwith seized him by the collar; the man laughed, Bagg says it was such a strange awkward laugh. "Do you know whom you have got hold of, sodger?" said he. "I believe I do, sir," said Bagg, "and in that belief will hold you fast in the name of King George and the quarter-sessions"; the next moment he was sprawling with his heels in the air. Bagg says there was nothing remarkable in that; he was only flung by a kind of wrestling trick, which he could easily have baffled had he been aware of it. "You will not

do that again, sir," said he, as he got up and put himself on his guard. The fellow laughed again more strangely and awkwardly than before; then, bending his body and moving his head from one side to the other as a cat does before she springs, and crying out, "Here's for ye, sodger!" he made a dart at Bagg, rushing in with his head foremost. "That will do, sir," says Bagg, and, drawing himself back, he put in a left-handed blow with all the force of his body and arm, just over the fellow's right eye — Bagg is a left-handed hitter — you must know — and it was a blow of that kind which won him his famous battle at Edinburgh with the big Highland sergeant. Bagg says that he was quite satisfied with the blow, more especially when he saw the fellow reel, fling out his arms, and fall to the ground. "And now, sir," said he, "I'll make bold to hand you over to the quarter-sessions, and, if there is a hundred pounds for taking you, who has more right to it than myself?" So he went forward, but ere he could lay hold of his man the other was again on his legs, and was prepared to renew the combat. They grappled each other — Bagg says he had not much fear of the result, as he now felt himself the best man, the other seeming half stunned with the blow — but just then there came on a blast, a horrible roaring wind bearing night upon its wings, snow, and sleet, and hail. Bagg says he had the fellow by the throat quite fast, as he thought, but suddenly

he became bewildered, and knew not where he was; and the man seemed to melt away from his grasp, and the wind howled more and more, and the night poured down darker and darker, the snow and the sleet thicker and more blinding. "Lord have mercy upon us!" said Bagg.'

Myself. A strange adventure that; it is well that Bagg got home alive.

John. He says that the fight was a fair fight, and that the fling he got was a fair fling, the result of a common enough wrestling trick. But with respect to the storm, which rose up just in time to save the fellow, he is of opinion that it was not fair, but something Irish and supernatural.

Myself. I dare say he's right. I have read of witchcraft in the Bible.

John. He wishes much to have one more encounter with the fellow; he says that on fair ground, and in fine weather, he has no doubt that he could master him, and hand him over to the quarter-sessions. He says that a hundred pounds would be no bad thing to be disbanded upon, for he wishes to take an inn at Swanton-Morley, keep a cock-pit, and live respectably.

Myself. He is quite right; and now kiss me, my darling brother, for I must go back through the bog to Templemore.

CHAPTER X

FROM the wild scenes which I have attempted to describe in the latter pages I must now transport the reader to others of a widely different character. He must suppose himself no longer in Ireland, but in the eastern corner of merry England. Bogs, ruins, and mountains have disappeared, amidst the vapours of the west: I have nothing more to say of them; the region in which we are now is not famous for objects of that kind: perhaps it flatters itself that it can produce fairer and better things; there is a fine old city before us.

To this place, when the war was over, my father retired: it was here that the old tired soldier set himself down with his little family. He had passed the greater part of his life in meritorious exertion, in the service of his country, and his chief wish now was to spend the remainder of his days in quiet and respectability; his means, it is true, were not very ample; fortunate it was that his desires corresponded with them: with a small fortune of his own, and with his half-pay as a royal soldier, he had no fears for himself or for his faithful partner and helpmate; but then his children!

‘I have been writing to the Duke,’ said my father one day to my excellent mother, after we had been

at home somewhat better than a year. 'I have been writing to the Duke of York about a commission for that eldest boy of ours. He, however, affords me no hopes; he says that his list is crammed with names, and that the greater number of the candidates have better claims than my son.'

'I do not see how that can be,' said my mother.

'Nor do I,' replied my father. 'I see the sons of bankers and merchants gazetted every month, and I do not see what claims they have to urge, unless they be golden ones. However, I have not served my king fifty years to turn grumbler at this time of life.' I suppose that the people at the head of affairs know what is most proper and convenient; perhaps when the lad sees how difficult, nay, how impossible it is that he should enter the army, he will turn his mind to some other profession; I wish he may!'

'I think he has already,' said my mother; 'you see how fond he is of the arts, of drawing and painting, and, as far as I can judge, what he has already done is very respectable; his mind seems quite turned that way, and I heard him say the other day that he would sooner be a Michael Angelo than a general officer. But you are always talking of him; what do you think of doing with the other child?'

'What, indeed!' said my father; 'that is a consideration which gives me no little uneasiness. I am afraid it will be much more difficult to settle him in life than his brother. What is he fitted for, even

were it in my power to provide for him? God help the child! I bear him no ill-will, on the contrary, all love and affection; but I cannot shut my eyes; there is something so strange about him! How he behaved in Ireland! I sent him to school to learn Greek, and he picked up Irish!’

‘And Greek as well,’ said my mother. ‘I heard him say the other day that he could read St. John in the original tongue. He thinks of other things as well.’

‘Other languages, you mean,’ said my father. ‘It is strange that he has conceived such a zest for the study of languages; no sooner did he come home than he persuaded me to send him to that old priest to learn French and Italian, and, if I remember right, you abetted him; but, as I said before, it is in the nature of women invariably to take the part of the second-born. Well, there is no harm in learning French and Italian, perhaps much good in his case, as they may drive the other tongue out of his head. Irish! why, he might go to the university but for that; but how would he look when, on being examined with respect to his attainments, it was discovered that he understood Irish? How did you learn it? they would ask him; how did you become acquainted with the language of Papists and rebels. The boy would be sent away in disgrace.’

‘Be under no apprehension, I have no doubt that he has long since forgotten it.’

‘I am glad to hear it,’ said my father; ‘for, between ourselves, I love the poor child; ay, quite as well as my first-born. I trust they will do well, and that God will be their shield and guide; I have no doubt He will, for I have read something in the Bible to that effect. What is that text about the young ravens being fed?’

‘I know a better than that,’ said my mother; ‘one of David’s own words, “I have been young and now am grown old, yet never have I seen the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread.”’

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In an old court of the old town lived a certain elderly personage, perhaps sixty, or thereabouts; he was rather tall, and something of a robust make, with a countenance in which bluffness was singularly blended with vivacity and grimace, and with a complexion which would have been ruddy but for a yellow hue which rather predominated. His dress consisted of a snuff-coloured coat and drab pantaloons, the former evidently seldom subjected to the annoyance of a brush, and the latter exhibiting here and there spots of something which, if not grease, bore a strong resemblance to it; add to these articles an immense frill, seldom of the purest white, but invariably of the finest French cambric, and you have some idea of his dress. He had rather a remarkable stoop, but his step was rapid and vigorous, and as he hurried along the streets he would

glance to the right and left with a pair of big eyes like plums, and on recognising anyone would exalt a pair of grizzled eyebrows, and slightly kiss a tawny and ungloved hand. At certain hours of the day he might be seen entering the doors of female boarding-schools, generally with a book in his hand, and perhaps another just peering from the orifice of a capacious back pocket; and at a certain season of the year he might be seen, dressed in white, before the altar of a certain small popish chapel, chanting from the breviary in very intelligible Latin, or perhaps reading from the desk in utterly unintelligible English. Such was my preceptor in the French and Italian tongues. 'Exul sacerdos; vone banished priest. I came into England twenty-five years ago, "my dear."' "

So I studied French and Italian under the tuition of the banished priest, to whose house I went regularly every evening to receive instruction. I made considerable progress in the acquisition of the two languages. I found the French by far the most difficult, chiefly on account of the accent, which my master himself possessed in no great purity, being a Norman by birth. The Italian was my favourite.

Under this old man, who was well versed in the southern languages, besides studying French and Italian, I acquired some knowledge of Spanish. But I did not devote my time entirely to philology; I had other pursuits. I had not forgotten the rov-

ing life I had led in former days, nor its delights; neither was I formed by Nature to be a pallid indoor student. No, no! I was fond of other and, I say it boldly, better things than study. I had an attachment to the angle, ay, and to the gun likewise. In our house was a condemned musket, bearing somewhere on its lock, in rather antique characters, 'Tower, 1746'; with this weapon I had already, in Ireland, performed some execution among the rooks and choughs, and it was now again destined to be a source of solace and amusement to me, in the winter season, especially on occasions of severe frost when birds abounded. Sallying forth with it at these times, far into the country, I seldom returned at night without a string of bullfinches, blackbirds, and linnets hanging in triumph round my neck. When I reflect on the immense quantity of powder and shot which I crammed down the muzzle of my uncouth fowling-piece, I am less surprised at the number of birds which I slaughtered, than that I never blew my hands, face, and old honey-combed gun, at one and the same time, to pieces.

But the winter, alas! (I speak as a fowler) seldom lasts in England more than three or four months; so, during the rest of the year, when not occupied with my philological studies, I had to seek for other diversions. I have already given a hint that I was also addicted to the angle. Of course there is no

comparison between the two pursuits, the rod and line seeming but very poor trumpery to one who has had the honour of carrying a noble firelock. There is a time, however, for all things; and we return to any favourite amusement with the greater zest from being compelled to relinquish it for a season. So, if I shot birds in winter with my firelock, I caught fish in summer, or attempted so to do, with my angle. I was not quite so successful, it is true, with the latter as with the former, possibly because it afforded me less pleasure. It was, indeed, too much of a listless pastime to inspire me with any great interest. I not unfrequently fell into a doze whilst sitting on the bank, and more than once let my rod drop from my hands into the water.

At some distance from the city, behind a range of hilly ground which rises towards the south-west, is a small river, the waters of which, after many meanderings, eventually enter the principal river of the district, and assist to swell the tide which it rolls down to the ocean.

I was in the habit of spending many an hour on the banks of that rivulet with my rod in my hand, and, when tired with angling, would stretch myself on the grass, and gaze upon the waters as they glided past, and not unfrequently, divesting myself of my clothing, I would plunge into the deep pool which I have already mentioned, for I had long since learned to swim. And it came to pass, that on

one hot summer's day, after bathing in the pool, I passed along the meadow till I came to a shallow part, and, wading over to the opposite side, I adjusted my dress, and commenced fishing in another pool, beside which was a small clump of hazels.

And there I sat upon the bank, at the bottom of the hill which slopes down from 'the Earl's Home'; my float was on the waters, and my back was towards the old hall. I drew up many fish, small and great, which I took from off the hook mechanically, and flung upon the bank, for I was almost unconscious of what I was about, for my mind was not with my fish. I was thinking of my earlier years — of the Scottish crags and the heaths of Ireland — and sometimes my mind would dwell on my studies — on the sonorous stanzas of Dante, rising and falling like the waves of the sea — or would strive to remember a couplet or two of poor Monsieur Boileau.

'Canst thou answer to thy conscience for pulling all those fish out of the water and leaving them to gasp in the sun?' said a voice, clear and sonorous as a bell.

I started, and looked round. Close behind me stood the tall figure of a man, dressed in raiment of quaint and singular fashion, but of goodly materials. He was in the prime and vigour of manhood; his features handsome and noble, but full of calmness and benevolence; at least I thought so, though they

were somewhat shaded by a hat of finest beaver, with broad drooping eaves.

‘Surely that is a very cruel diversion in which thou indulgest, my young friend?’ he continued.

‘I am sorry for it, if it be, sir,’ said I, rising; ‘but I do not think it cruel to fish.’

‘What are thy reasons for thinking so?’

‘Fishing is mentioned frequently in Scripture. Simon Peter was a fisherman.’

‘True; and Andrew his brother. But thou forgettest; they did not follow fishing as a diversion, as I fear thou doest. — Thou readest the Scriptures?’

‘Sometimes.’

‘Sometimes? — not daily? — that is to be regretted. What profession dost thou make? — I mean to what religious denomination dost thou belong, my young friend?’

‘Church.’

‘It is a very good profession — there is much of Scripture contained in its liturgy. Dost thou read aught beside the Scriptures?’

‘Sometimes.’

‘What dost thou read besides?’

‘Greek, and Dante.’

‘Indeed! then thou hast the advantage over myself; I can only read the former. Well, I am rejoiced to find that thou hast other pursuits beside thy fishing. Dost thou know Hebrew?’

‘No.’

‘Thou shouldest study it. Why dost thou not undertake the study?’

‘I have no books.’

‘I will lend thee books, if thou wish to undertake the study. I live yonder at the hall, as perhaps thou knowest. I have a library there, in which are many curious books, both in Greek and Hebrew, which I will show to thee, whenever thou mayest find it convenient to come and see me. Farewell! I am glad to find that thou hast pursuits more satisfactory than thy cruel fishing.’

And the man of peace departed, and left me on the bank of the stream. Whether from the effect of his words or from want of inclination to the sport, I know not, but from that day I became less and less a practitioner of that ‘cruel fishing.’ I rarely flung line and angle into the water, but I not unfrequently wandered by the banks of the pleasant rivulet. It seems singular to me, on reflection, that I never availed myself of his kind invitation.

CHAPTER XI

I AM standing on the castle hill in the midst of a fair of horses. An old man draws nigh, he is mounted on a lean pony, and he leads by the bridle one of these animals; nothing very remarkable about that creature, unless in being smaller than the rest and gentle, which they are not; he is not of the sightliest look; he is almost dun, and over one eye a thick film has gathered. But, stay! there *is* something remarkable about that horse, there is something in his action in which he differs from all the rest; as he advances, the clamour is hushed! all eyes are turned upon him — what looks of interest — of respect — and, what is this? people are taking off their hats — surely not to that steed! Yes, verily! men, especially old men, are taking off their hats to that one-eyed steed, and I hear more than one deep-drawn ah!

‘What horse is that?’ said I to a very old fellow, the counterpart of the old man on the pony, save that the last wore a faded suit of velveteen, and this one was dressed in a white frock.

‘The best in mother England,’ said the very old man, taking a knobbed stick from his mouth, and looking me in the face, at first carelessly, but presently with something like interest; ‘he is old like

myself, but can still trot his twenty miles an hour. You won't live long, my swain — tall and overgrown ones like thee never does — yet if you should chance to reach my years, you may boast to thy great-grandboys thou hast seen Marshland Shales.'

Amain I did for the horse what I would neither do for earl or baron, doffed my hat; yes! I doffed my hat to the wondrous horse, the fast trotter, the best in mother England; and I, too, drew a deep ah! and repeated the words of the old fellows around. 'Such a horse as this we shall never see again; a pity that he is so old.'

Now during all this time I had a kind of consciousness that I had been the object of some person's observation; that eyes were fastened upon me from somewhere in the crowd. Sometimes I thought myself watched from before, sometimes from behind; and occasionally methought that, if I just turned my head to the right or left, I should meet a peering and inquiring glance; and indeed once or twice I did turn, expecting to see somebody whom I knew, yet always without success; though it appeared to me that I was but a moment too late, and that someone had just slipped away from the direction to which I turned, like the figure in a magic lantern. Once I was quite sure that there were a pair of eyes glaring over my right shoulder; my attention, however, was so fully occupied with the objects which I have attempted to describe, that I

thought very little of this coming and going, this flitting and dodging of I knew not whom or what. It was, after all, a matter of sheer indifference to me who was looking at me. I could only wish, whomsoever it might be, to be more profitably employed; so I continued enjoying what I saw: and now there was a change in the scene, the wondrous old horse departed with his aged guardian; other objects of interest are at hand; two or three men on horseback are hurrying through the crowd, they are widely different in their appearance from the other people of the fair; not so much in dress, for they are clad something after the fashion of rustic jockeys, but in their look — no light-brown hair have they, no ruddy cheeks, no blue quiet glances belong to them; their features are dark, their locks long, black, and shining, and their eyes are wild; they are admirable horsemen, but they do not sit the saddle in the manner of common jockeys, they seem to float or hover upon it, like gulls upon the waves. Two of them are mere striplings, but the third is a very tall man with a countenance heroically beautiful, but wild, wild, wild. As they rush along, the crowd give way on all sides, and now a kind of ring or circus is formed, within which the strange men exhibit their horsemanship, rushing past each other, in and out, after the manner of a reel, the tall man occasionally balancing himself upon the saddle, and standing erect on one foot. He had just regained his seat after the

latter feat, and was about to push his horse to a gallop, when a figure started forward from close beside me, and laying his hand on his neck, and pulling him gently downward, appeared to whisper something into his ear; presently the tall man raised his head, and, scanning the crowd for a moment in the direction in which I was standing, fixed his eyes full upon me, and anon the countenance of the whisperer was turned, but only in part, and the side-glance of another pair of wild eyes was directed towards my face, but the entire visage of the big black man, half stooping as he was, was turned full upon mine.

But now, with a nod to the figure who had stopped him, and with another inquiring glance at myself, the big man once more put his steed into motion, and, after riding round the ring a few more times, darted through a lane in the crowd, and followed by his two companions disappeared, whereupon the figure who had whispered to him, and had subsequently remained in the middle of the space, came towards me, and cracking a whip which he held in his hand so loudly that the report was nearly equal to that of a pocket-pistol, he cried in a strange tone: —

‘What! the sap-engro? Lor! the sap-engro upon the hill!’

‘I remember that word,’ said I, ‘and I almost think I remember you. You can’t be ——’

‘Jasper, your pal! Truth, and no lie, brother.’

‘It is strange that you should have known me,’ said I. ‘I am certain, but for the word you used, I should never have recognised you.’

‘Not so strange as you may think, brother; there is something in your face which would prevent people from forgetting you, even though they might wish it; and your face is not much altered since the time you wot of, though you are so much grown. I thought it was you, but to make sure I dodged about, inspecting you. I believe you felt me, though I never touched you; a sign, brother, that we are akin, that we are dui palor — two relations. Your blood beat when mine was near, as mine always does at the coming of a brother; and we became brothers in that lane.’

‘And where are you staying?’ said I; ‘in this town?’

‘Not in the town; the like of us don’t find it exactly wholesome to stay in towns, we keep abroad. But I have little to do here — come with me, and I’ll show you where we stay.’

We descended the hill in the direction of the north, and passing along the suburb reached the old Norman bridge, which we crossed; the chalk precipice, with the ruin on its top, was now before us; but turning to the left we walked swiftly along, and presently came to some rising ground, which ascending, we found ourselves upon a wild moor or heath.

‘You are one of them,’ said I, ‘whom people call ——’

‘Just so,’ said Jasper; ‘but never mind what people call us.’

‘And that tall handsome man on the hill, whom you whispered, I suppose he’s one of ye. What is his name?’

‘Tawno Chikno,’ said Jasper, ‘which means the small one; we call him such because he is the biggest man of all our nation. You say he is handsome, that is not the word, brother; he’s the beauty of the world. Women run wild at the sight of Tawno. An earl’s daughter, near London — a fine young lady with diamonds round her neck — fell in love with Tawno. I have seen that lass on a heath, as this may be, kneel down to Tawno, clasp his feet, begging to be his wife — or anything else — if she might go with him. But Tawno would have nothing to do with her: “I have a wife of my own,” said he, “a lawful Romany wife, whom I love better than the whole world, jealous though she sometimes be.”’

‘And is she very beautiful?’ said I.

‘Why, you know, brother, beauty is frequently a matter of taste; however, as you ask my opinion, I should say not quite so beautiful as himself.’

We had now arrived at a small valley between two hills, or downs, the sides of which were covered with furze; in the midst of this valley were various

carts and low tents forming a rude kind of encampment; several dark children were playing about, who took no manner of notice of us. As we passed one of the tents, however, a canvas screen was lifted up, and a woman supported upon a crutch hobbled out. She was about the middle age, and besides being lame, was bitterly ugly; she was very slovenly dressed, and on her swarthy features ill-nature was most visibly stamped. She did not deign me a look, but, addressing Jasper in a tongue which I did not understand, appeared to put some eager questions to him.

‘He’s coming,’ said Jasper, and passed on. ‘Poor fellow,’ said he to me, ‘he has scarcely been gone an hour, and she’s jealous already. Well,’ he continued, ‘what do you think of her? you have seen her now, and can judge for yourself — that ’ere woman is Tawno Chikno’s wife!’

We went to the farthest of the tents, which stood at a slight distance from the rest, and which exactly resembled the one which I have described on a former occasion; we went in and sat down one on each side of a small fire which was smouldering on the ground. There was no one else in the tent, but a tall tawny woman of middle age, who was busily knitting. ‘Brother,’ said Jasper, ‘I wish to hold some pleasant discourse with you.’

‘As much as you please,’ said I, ‘provided you can find anything pleasant to talk about.’

‘Never fear,’ said Jasper; ‘and first of all we will talk of yourself. Where have you been all this long time?’

‘Here and there,’ said I, ‘and far and near, going about with the soldiers; but there is no soldiering now, so we have sat down, father and family, in the town there.’

‘And do you still hunt snakes?’ said Jasper.

‘No,’ said I, ‘I have given up that long ago; I do better now: read books and learn languages.’

‘Well, I am sorry you have given up your snake-hunting; many’s the strange talk I have had with our people about your snake and yourself, and how you frightened my father and mother in the lane.’

‘And where are your father and mother?’

‘Where I shall never see them, brother; at least, I hope so.’

‘Not dead?’

‘No, not dead; they are bitchadey pawdel.’

‘What’s that?’

‘Sent across — banished.’

‘Ah! I understand; I am sorry for them. And so you are here alone!’

‘Not quite alone, brother.’

‘No, not alone; but with the rest — Tawno Chikno takes care of you.’

‘Takes care of me, brother!’

‘Yes, stands to you in the place of a father — keeps you out of harm’s way.’

‘What do you take me for, brother?’

‘For about three years older than myself.’

‘Perhaps; but you are of the Gorgios, and I am a Romany Chal. Tawno Chikno take care of Jasper Petulengro!’

‘Is that your name?’

‘Don’t you like it?’

‘Very much, I never heard a sweeter; it is something like what you call me.’

‘The horse-shoe master and the snake-fellow, I am the first.’

‘Who gave you that name?’

‘Ask Pharaoh.’

‘I would, if he were here, but I do not see him.’

‘I am Pharaoh.’

‘Then you are a king.’

‘Chachipen Pal.’

‘I do not understand you.’

‘Where are your languages? You want two things, brother: mother sense, and gentle Romany!’

‘What makes you think that I want sense?’

‘That, being so old, you can’t yet guide yourself!’

‘I can read Dante, Jasper.’

‘Anan, brother.’

‘I can charm snakes, Jasper.’

‘I know you can, brother.’

‘Yes, and horses too; bring me the most vicious in the land, if I whisper he’ll be tame.’

‘Then the more shame for you — a snake-fellow

—a horse-witch — and a lil-reader — yet you can't shift for yourself. I laugh at you, brother!'

'Then you can shift for yourself?'

'For myself and for others, brother.'

'And what does Chikno?'

'Sells me horses, when I bid him. Those horses on the chong were mine.'

'And has he none of his own?'

'Sometimes he has; but he is not so well off as myself. When my father and mother were bitcha-dey pawdel, which, to tell you the truth, they were, for chiving wafodo dloovu, they left me all they had, which was not a little, and I became the head of our family, which was not a small one. I was not older than you when that happened; yet our people said they had never a better krallis to contrive and plan for them, and to keep them in order. And this is so well known, that many Romany Chals, not of our family, come and join themselves to us, living with us for a time, in order to better themselves, more especially those of the poorer sort, who have little of their own. Tawno is one of these.'

'Is that fine fellow poor?'

'One of the poorest, brother. Handsome as he is, he has not a horse of his own to ride on. Perhaps we may put it down to his wife, who cannot move about, being a cripple, as you saw.'

'And you are what is called a Gipsy King!'

'Ay, ay, a Romany Kral.'

‘Are there other kings?’

‘Those who call themselves so; but the true Pharaoh is Petulengro.’

‘Did Pharaoh make horse-shoes?’

‘The first who ever did, brother.’

‘Pharaoh lived in Egypt.’

‘So did we once, brother.’

‘And you left it?’

‘My fathers did, brother.’

‘And why did they come here?’

‘They had their reasons, brother.’

‘And you are not English?’

‘We are not Gorgios.’

‘And you have a language of your own?’

‘Avali.’

‘This is wonderful.’

‘Ha, ha!’ cried the woman, who had hitherto sat knitting, at the farther end of the tent, without saying a word, though not inattentive to our conversation, as I could perceive, by certain glances, which she occasionally cast upon us both. ‘Ha, ha!’ she screamed, fixing upon me two eyes, which shone like burning coals, and which were filled with an expression both of scorn and malignity, ‘It is wonderful, is it, that we should have a language of our own? What! you grudge the poor people the speech they talk among themselves? That’s just like you Gorgios, you would have everybody stupid, single-tongued idiots, like yourselves. We are

taken before the Poknees of the gav, myself and sister, to give an account of ourselves. So I says to my sister's little boy, speaking Romany, I says to the little boy who is with us, run to my son Jasper, and the rest, and tell them to be off, there are hawks abroad. So the Poknees questions us, and lets us go, not being able to make anything of us; but, as we are going, he calls us back. "Good woman," says the Poknees, "what was that I heard you say just now to the little boy?" "I was telling him, your worship, to go and see the time of day, and, to save trouble, I said it in our own language." "Where did you get that language?" says the Poknees. "'Tis our own language, sir," I tells him, "we did not steal it." "Shall I tell you what it is, my good woman?" said the Poknees. "I would thank you, sir," says I, "for 'tis often we are asked about it." "Well, then," says the Poknees, "it is no language at all, merely a made-up gibberish." "Oh, bless your wisdom," says I, with a curtsy, "you can tell us what our language is, without understanding it!" Another time we meet a parson. "Good woman," says he, "what's that you are talking? Is it broken language?" "Of course, your reverence," says I, "we are broken people; give a shilling, your reverence, to the poor broken woman." Oh, these Gorgios! they grudge us our very language!

'She called you her son, Jasper?'

'I am her son, brother.'

‘I thought you said your parents were ——’

‘Bitchadey pawdel; you thought right, brother. This is my wife’s mother.’

‘Then you are married, Jasper?’

‘Ay, truly; I am husband and father. You will see wife and chabo anon.’

‘Where are they now?’

‘In the gav, penning dukkerin.’

‘We were talking of language, Jasper?’

‘True, brother.’

‘Yours must be a rum one?’

‘’Tis called Romany.’

‘I would gladly know it.’

‘You need it sorely.’

‘Would you teach it me?’

‘None sooner.’

‘Suppose we begin now?’

‘Suppose we do, brother.’

‘Not whilst I am here,’ said the woman, flinging her knitting down, and starting upon her feet; ‘not whilst I am here shall this Gorgio learn Romany. A pretty manœuvre, truly; and what would be the end of it? I goes to the farming ker with my sister, to tell a fortune, and earn a few sixpences for the chabes. I sees a jolly pig in the yard, and I says to my sister, speaking Romany, “Do so and so,” says I; which the farming man hearing, asks what we are talking about. “Nothing at all, master,” says I; “something about the weather”; when who should

start up from behind a pale, where he has been listening, but this ugly Gorgio, crying out, "They are after poisoning your pigs, neighbour!" so that we are glad to run, I and my sister, with perhaps the farm-engro shouting after us. Says my sister to me, when we have got fairly off, "How came that ugly one to know what you said to me?" Whereupon I answers, "It all comes of my son Jasper, who brings the Gorgio to our fire, and must needs be teaching him." "Who was fool there?" says my sister. "Who, indeed, but my son Jasper," I answers. And here should I be a greater fool to sit still and suffer it; which I will not do. I do not like the look of him; he looks over-gorgeous. An ill day to the Romans when he masters Romany; and when I says that I pens a true dukkerin.'

'What do you call God, Jasper?'

'You had better be jawing,' said the woman, raising her voice to a terrible scream; 'you had better be moving off, my Gorgio; hang you for a keen one, sitting there by the fire, and stealing my language before my face. Do you know whom you have to deal with? Do you know that I am dangerous? My name is Herne, and I comes of the hairy ones!'

And a hairy one she looked! She wore her hair clubbed upon her head, fastened with many strings and ligatures; but now, tearing these off, her locks, originally jet black, but now partially grizzled with age, fell down on every side of her, covering her

face and back as far down as her knees. No she-bear from Lapland ever looked more fierce and hairy than did that woman, as, standing in the open part of the tent, with her head bent down, and her shoulders drawn up, seemingly about to precipitate herself upon me, she repeated, again and again:

‘My name is Herne, and I comes of the hairy ones! ——’

‘I call God Duvel, brother.’

‘It sounds very like Devil.’

‘It doth, brother, it doth.’

‘And what do you call divine, I mean godly?’

‘Oh! I call that duvelskoe.’

‘I am thinking of something, Jasper.’

‘What are you thinking of, brother?’

‘Would it not be a rum thing if divine and devilish were originally one and the same word?’

‘It would, brother, it would ——’

.
From this time I had frequent interviews with Jasper, sometimes in his tent, sometimes on the heath, about which we would roam for hours, discoursing on various matters. Sometimes mounted on one of his horses, of which he had several, I would accompany him to various fairs and markets in the neighbourhood, to which he went on his own affairs or those of his tribe. I soon found that I had become acquainted with a most singular people, whose habits and pursuits awakened within me the



‘MY NAME IS HERNE, AND I COMES OF THE HAIRY ONES!’

highest interest. Of all connected with them, however, their language was doubtless that which exercised the greatest influence over my imagination. I had at first some suspicion that it would prove a mere made-up gibberish. But I was soon undeceived. Broken, corrupted, and half in ruins as it was, it was not long before I found that it was an original speech, far more so, indeed, than one or two others of high name and celebrity, which, up to that time, I had been in the habit of regarding with respect and veneration. Indeed, many obscure points connected with the vocabulary of these languages, and to which neither classic nor modern lore afforded any clue, I thought I could now clear up by means of this strange broken tongue, spoken by people who dwelt among thickets and furze bushes, in tents as tawny as their faces, and whom the generality of mankind designated, and with much semblance of justice, as thieves and vagabonds. But where did this speech come from, and who were they who spoke it? These were questions which I could not solve, and which Jasper himself, when pressed, confessed his inability to answer. 'But, whoever we be, brother,' said he, 'we are an old people, and not what folks in general imagine, broken Gorgios; and, if we are not Egyptians, we are at any rate Romany Chals!'

'Romany Chals! I should not wonder after all,' said I, 'that these people had something to do with

the founding of Rome. Rome, it is said, was built by vagabonds; who knows but that some tribe of the kind settled down thereabouts and called the town which they built after their name? but whence did they come originally? ah! there is the difficulty.'

But abandoning these questions, which at that time were far too profound for me, I went on studying the language, and at the same time the characters and manners of these strange people. My rapid progress in the former astonished, while it delighted, Jasper. 'We'll no longer call you Sap-engro, brother,' said he, 'but rather Lav-engro, which in the language of the Gorgios meaneth Word Master.' 'Nay, brother,' said Tawno Chikno, with whom I had become very intimate, 'you had better call him Cooro-mengro. I have put on *the gloves* with him, and find him a pure fist master; I like him for that, for I am a Cooro-mengro myself, and was born at Brummagem.'

'I likes him for his modesty,' said Mrs. Chikno; 'I never hears any ill words come from his mouth, but, on the contrary, much sweet language. His talk is golden, and he has taught my eldest to say his prayers in Romany, which my rover had never the grace to do.' 'He is the pal of my rom,' said Mrs. Petulengro, who was a very handsome woman, 'and therefore I likes him, and not less for his being a rye; folks call me high-minded, and perhaps I have reason to be so; before I married Pharaoh I

had an offer from a lord — I likes the young rye, and, if he chooses to follow us, he shall have my sister. What say you, mother? should not the young rye have my sister Ursula?’

‘I am going to my people,’ said Mrs. Herne, placing a bundle upon a donkey, which was her own peculiar property; ‘I am going to Yorkshire, for I can stand this no longer. You say you like him: in that we differs: I hates the Gorgio, and would like, speaking Romanly, to mix a little poison with his waters. And now go to Lundra, my children, I goes to Yorkshire. Take my blessing with ye, and a little bit of a gillie to cheer your hearts with when ye are weary. In all kinds of weather have we lived together; but now we are parted. I goes broken-hearted — I can’t keep you company; ye are no longer Romany. To gain a bad brother ye have lost a good mother.’

CHAPTER XII

So the gipsies departed: Mrs. Herne to Yorkshire, and the rest to London. As for myself, I continued in the house of my parents, passing my time in much the same manner as I have already described, principally in philological pursuits: but I was now sixteen, and it was highly necessary that I should adopt some profession, unless I intended to fritter away my existence and to be a useless burden to those who had given me birth. But what profession was I to choose, there being none in the wide world perhaps for which I was suited; nor was there any one for which I felt any decided inclination, though perhaps there existed within me a lurking penchant for the profession of arms, which was natural enough, as, from my earliest infancy, I had been accustomed to military sights and sounds; but this profession was then closed, as I have already hinted, and, as I believe, it has since continued, to those who, like myself, had no better claims to urge than the services of a father.

My father, who, for certain reasons of his own, had no very high opinion of the advantages resulting from this career, would have gladly seen me enter the Church. His desire was, however, considerably abated by one or two passages of my life

which occurred to his recollection. He particularly dwelt on the unheard-of manner in which I had picked up the Irish language, and drew from thence the conclusion that I was not fitted by nature to cut a respectable figure at an English university. 'He will fly off in a tangent,' said he, 'and, when called upon to exhibit his skill in Greek, will be found proficient in Irish; I have observed the poor lad attentively, and really do not know what to make of him; but I am afraid he will never make a churchman!'

My parents deemed it necessary that I should adopt some profession, they named the law; the law was as agreeable to me as any other profession within my reach, so I adopted the law, and the consequence was that Blackstone, probably for the first time, found himself in company with Ab Gwilym. By adopting the law I had not ceased to be Lavengro.

So I sat behind a desk many hours in the day, ostensibly engaged in transcribing documents of various kinds. The scene of my labours was a strange old house, occupying one side of a long and narrow court, into which, however, the greater number of the windows looked not, but into an extensive garden, filled with fruit trees, in the rear of a large, handsome house, belonging to a highly respectable gentleman, who, moyennant un doux regard, had consented to instruct my father's

youngest son in the mysteries of glorious English law.

A more respectable-looking individual was never seen; he really looked what he was, a gentleman of the law — there was nothing of the pettifogger about him: somewhat under the middle size, and somewhat rotund in person, he was always dressed in a full suit of black, never worn long enough to become threadbare. His face was rubicund, and not without keenness; but the most remarkable thing about him was the crown of his head, which was bald, and shone like polished ivory, nothing more white, smooth, and lustrous. Some people have said that he wore false calves, probably because his black silk stockings never exhibited a wrinkle; they might just as well have said that he waddled, because his boots creaked; for these last, which were always without a speck, and polished as his crown, though of a different hue, did creak, as he walked rather slowly. I cannot say that I ever saw him walk fast.

So I sat behind the deal desk, engaged in copying documents of various kinds; and in the apartment in which I sat, and in the adjoining ones, there were others, some of whom likewise copied documents, while some were engaged in the yet more difficult task of drawing them up; and some of these, sons of nobody, were paid for the work they did, whilst others, like myself, sons of somebody, paid for being

permitted to work, which, as our principal observed, was but reasonable, forasmuch as we not unfrequently utterly spoiled the greater part of the work intrusted to our hands.

There was one part of the day when I generally found myself quite alone, I mean at the hour when the rest went home to their principal meal; I, being the youngest, was left to take care of the premises, to answer the bell, and so forth, till relieved, which was seldom before the expiration of an hour and a half, when I myself went home; this period, however, was anything but disagreeable to me, for it was then that I did what best pleased me, and, leaving off copying the documents, I sometimes indulged in a fit of musing, my chin resting on both my hands, and my elbows planted on the desk; or, opening the desk aforesaid, I would take out one of the books contained within it, and the book which I took out was almost invariably, not Blackstone, but Ab Gwilym.

Ah, that Ab Gwilym! I am much indebted to him, and it were ungrateful on my part not to devote a few lines to him and his songs in this my history.

I was studying Welsh, and I fell in with Ab Gwilym by no very strange chance. But before I say more about Ab Gwilym, I must be permitted — I really must — to say a word or two about the language in which he wrote, that same ‘Sweet Welsh.’

If I remember rightly, I found the language a difficult one; in mastering it, however, I derived unexpected assistance from what of Irish remained in my head, and I soon found that they were cognate dialects, springing from some old tongue which itself, perhaps, had sprung from one much older. And here I cannot help observing cursorily that I every now and then, while studying this Welsh, generally supposed to be the original tongue of Britain, encountered words which, according to the lexicographers, were venerable words, highly expressive, showing the wonderful power and originality of the Welsh, in which, however, they were no longer used in common discourse, but were relics, precious relics, of the first speech of Britain, perhaps of the world; with which words, however, I was already well acquainted, and which I had picked up, not in learned books, classic books, and in tongues of old renown, but whilst listening to Mr. Petulengro and Tawno Chikno talking over their everyday affairs in the language of the tents; which circumstance did not fail to give rise to deep reflection in those moments when, planting my elbows on the deal desk, I rested my chin upon my hands. But it is probable that I should have abandoned the pursuit of the Welsh language, after obtaining a very superficial acquaintance with it, had it not been for Ab Gwilym.

But to proceed with my own story; I soon ceased all at once to take much pleasure in the pursuits

which formerly interested me, I yawned over Ab Gwilym.

And then I again sought up the book which had so captivated me in my infancy, and I read it through; and I sought up others of a similar character, and in seeking for them I met books also of adventure, but by no means of a harmless description, lives of wicked and lawless men, Murray and Latroon — books of singular power — books at one time highly in vogue; now deservedly forgotten, and most difficult to be found.

And when I had gone through these books, what was my state of mind? I had derived entertainment from their perusal, but they left me more listless and unsettled than before, and I really knew not what to do to pass my time. My philological studies had become distasteful, and I had never taken any pleasure in the duties of my profession. I sat behind my desk in a state of torpor, my mind almost as blank as the paper before me, on which I rarely traced a line. It was always a relief to hear the bell ring, as it afforded me an opportunity of doing something which I was yet capable of doing, to rise and open the door and stare in the countenances of the visitors. All of a sudden I fell to studying countenances, and soon flattered myself that I had made considerable progress in the science.

Amongst the various countenances which I admitted during the period of my answering the bell

there were two which particularly pleased me, and which belonged to an elderly yeoman and his wife, whom some little business had brought to our law sanctuary. I believe they experienced from me some kindness and attention, which won the old people's hearts. So, one day, when their little business had been brought to a conclusion, and they chanced to be alone with me, who was seated as usual behind the deal desk in the outer room, the old man with some confusion began to tell me how grateful himself and dame felt for the many attentions I had shown them, and how desirous they were to make me some remuneration. 'Of course,' said the old man, 'we must be cautious what we offer to so fine a young gentleman as yourself; we have, however, something we think will just suit the occasion, a strange kind of thing which people say is a book, though no one that my dame or myself have shown it to can make anything out of it; so as we are told that you are a fine young gentleman, who can read all the tongues of the earth and stars, as the Bible says, we thought, I and my dame, that it would be just the thing you would like; and my dame has it now at the bottom of her basket.'

'A book,' said I, 'how did you come by it?'

'We live near the sea,' said the old man, 'so near that sometimes our hut is wet with the spray; and it may now be a year ago that there was a fearful storm, and a ship was driven ashore during the

night, and ere the morn was a complete wreck. When we got up at daylight there were the poor shivering crew at our door; they were foreigners, red-haired men, whose speech we did not understand; but we took them in, and warmed them, and they remained with us three days; and when they went away they left behind them this thing, here it is, part of the contents of a box which was washed ashore.'

'And did you learn who they were?'

'Why, yes; they made us understand that they were Danes.'

Danes! thought I; Danes! and instantaneously, huge and grizzly, appeared to rise up before my vision the skull of the old pirate Dane, even as I had seen it of yore in the pent-house of the ancient church to which, with my mother and my brother, I had wandered on the memorable summer eve.

And now the old man handed me the book — a strange and uncouth-looking volume enough. It was not very large, but instead of the usual covering, was bound in wood, and was compressed with strong iron clasps. It was a printed book, but the pages were not of paper, but vellum, and the characters were black, and resembled those generally termed Gothic.

'It is certainly a curious book,' said I; 'and I should like to have it, but I can't think of taking it

as a gift, I must give you an equivalent, I never take presents from anybody.'

The old man whispered with his dame and chuckled, and then turned his face to me, and said, with another chuckle, 'Well, we have agreed about the price, but, may be, you will not consent.'

'I don't know,' said I; 'what do you demand?'

'Why, that you shake me by the hand, and hold out your cheek to my old dame; she has taken an affection to you.'

'I shall be very glad to shake you by the hand,' said I, 'but as for the other condition it requires consideration.'

'No consideration at all,' said the old man, with something like a sigh; 'she thinks you like her son, our only child, that was lost twenty years ago in the waves of the North Sea.'

'Oh, that alters the case altogether!' said I; 'and of course I can have no objection.'

And now, at once, I shook off my listlessness, to enable me to do which nothing could have happened more opportune than the above event. The Danes! the Danes! And I was at last to become acquainted, and in so singular a manner, with the speech of a people which had, as far back as I could remember, exercised the strongest influence over my imagination, as how should they not! — in infancy there was the summer-eve adventure, to which I often looked back, and always with a kind

of strange interest, with respect to those to whom such gigantic and wondrous bones could belong as I had seen on that occasion; and, more than this, I had been in Ireland, and there, under peculiar circumstances, this same interest was increased ten-fold. I had mingled much whilst there with the genuine Irish — a wild, but kind-hearted race, whose conversation was deeply imbued with traditionary lore connected with the early history of their own romantic land, and from them I heard enough of the Danes, but nothing commonplace, for they never mentioned them but in terms which tallied well with my own preconceived ideas. For at an early period the Danes had invaded Ireland, and had subdued it, and, though eventually driven out, had left behind them an enduring remembrance in the minds of the people, who loved to speak of their strength and their stature, in evidence of which they would point to the ancient raths or mounds, where the old Danes were buried, and where bones of extraordinary size were occasionally exhumed. And as the Danes surpassed other people in strength, so, according to my narrators, they also excelled all others in wisdom, or rather in Draoitheac, or Magic, for they were powerful sorcerers, they said, compared with whom the fairy men of the present day knew nothing at all, at all! and, amongst other wonderful things, they knew how to make strong beer from the heather that grows upon the bogs.

Little wonder if the interest, the mysterious interest, which I had early felt about the Danes was increased tenfold by my sojourn in Ireland.

And now I had in my possession a Danish book, which, from its appearance might be supposed to have belonged to the very old Danes indeed; but how was I to turn it to any account? I had the book, it is true, but I did not understand the language, and how was I to overcome that difficulty? Hardly by poring over the book; yet I did pore over the book, daily and nightly, till my eyes were dim, and it appeared to me every now and then I encountered words which I understood — English words, though strangely disguised; and I said to myself, Courage! English and Danish are cognate dialects, a time will come when I shall understand this Danish; and then I pored over the book again, but with all my poring I could not understand it; and then I became angry, and I bit my lips till the blood came; and I occasionally tore a handful from my hair, and flung it upon the floor. But that did not mend the matter, for still I did not understand the book, which, however, I began to see was written in rhyme — a circumstance rather difficult to discover at first, the arrangement of the lines not differing from that which is employed in prose; and its being written in rhyme made me only the more eager to understand it.

But I toiled in vain, for I had neither grammar

nor dictionary of the language; and when I sought for them could procure neither; and I was much dispirited, till suddenly a bright thought came into my head, and I said, Although I cannot obtain a dictionary or grammar, I can perhaps obtain a Bible in this language, and if I can procure a Bible I can learn the language, for the Bible in every tongue contains the same things, and I have only to compare the words of the Danish Bible with those of the English, and, if I persevere, I shall in time acquire the language of the Danes; and I was pleased with the thought, which I considered to be a bright one, and I no longer bit my lips or tore my hair, but took my hat, and, going forth, I flung my hat into the air.

And when my hat came down I put it on my head and commenced running, directing my course to the house of the Antinomian preacher who sold books, and whom I knew to have Bibles in various tongues amongst the number, and I arrived out of breath, and I found the Antinomian in his little library, dusting his books; and the Antinomian clergyman was a tall man of about seventy, who wore a hat with a broad brim and a shallow crown, and whose manner of speaking was exceedingly nasal; and when I saw him I cried, out of breath, 'Have you a Danish Bible?' and he replied, 'What do you want it for, friend?' and I answered, 'To learn Danish by.' 'And may be to learn thy duty,'

replied the Antinomian preacher. 'Truly, I have it not; but, as you are a customer of mine, I will endeavour to procure you one, and I will write to that laudable society which men call the Bible Society, an unworthy member of which I am, and I hope by next week to procure what you desire.'

And in this manner I procured the Danish Bible, and I commenced my task. First of all, however, I locked up in a closet the volume which had excited my curiosity, saying, 'Out of this closet thou comest not till I deem myself competent to read thee,' and then I sat down in right earnest, comparing every line in the one version with the corresponding one in the other; and I passed entire nights in this manner, till I was almost blind, and the task was tedious enough at first, but I quailed not, and soon began to make progress: and at first I had a misgiving that the old book might not prove a Danish book, but was soon reassured by reading many words in the Bible which I remembered to have seen in the book; and then I went on right merrily, and I found that the language which I was studying was by no means a difficult one, and in less than a month I deemed myself able to read the book.

Anon, I took the book from the closet, and proceeded to make myself master of its contents. I had some difficulty, for the language of the book, though in the main the same as the language of the Bible,

differed from it in some points, being apparently a more ancient dialect; by degrees, however, I overcame this difficulty, and I understood the contents of the book, and well did they correspond with all those ideas in which I had indulged connected with the Danes. For the book was a book of ballads, about the deeds of knights and champions and men of huge stature; ballads which, from time immemorial, had been sung in the North, and which some two centuries before the time of which I am speaking had been collected by one Anders Vedel, who lived with a certain Tycho Brahe, and assisted him in making observations upon the heavenly bodies at a place called Uranias Castle, on the little island of Hveen, in the Cattegat.

CHAPTER XIII

MY father, as I have already informed the reader, had been endowed by nature with great corporeal strength; indeed, I have been assured that, at the period of his prime, his figure had denoted the possession of almost Herculean powers. The strongest forms, however, do not always endure the longest, the very excess of the noble and generous juices which they contain being the cause of their premature decay. But, be that as it may, the health of my father, some few years after his retirement from the service to the quiet of domestic life, underwent a considerable change; his constitution appeared to be breaking up; and he was subject to severe attacks from various disorders, with which, till then, he had been utterly unacquainted. He was, however, wont to rally, more or less, after his illnesses, and might still occasionally be seen taking his walk, with his cane in his hand, and accompanied by his dog, who sympathized entirely with him, pining as he pined, improving as he improved, and never leaving the house save in his company, and in this manner matters went on for a considerable time, no very great apprehension with respect to my father's state being raised either in my mother's breast or my own. But, about six months after the period at

which I have arrived in my last chapter, it came to pass that my father experienced a severer attack than on any previous occasion.

He had the best medical advice; but it was easy to see, from the looks of his doctors, that they entertained but slight hopes of his recovery. His sufferings were great, yet he invariably bore them with unshaken fortitude. There was one thing remarkable connected with his illness; notwithstanding its severity, it never confined him to his bed. He was wont to sit in his little parlour, in his easy-chair, dressed in a faded regimental coat, his dog at his feet, who would occasionally lift his head from the hearth-rug on which he lay, and look his master wistfully in the face. And thus my father spent the greater part of his time, sometimes in prayer, sometimes in meditation, and sometimes in reading the Scriptures. I frequently sat with him, though, as I entertained a great awe for my father, I used to feel rather ill at ease, when, as sometimes happened, I found myself alone with him.

‘I wish to ask you a few questions,’ said he to me one day, after my mother had left the room.

‘I will answer anything you may please to ask me, my dear father.’

‘What have you been about lately?’

‘I have been occupied as usual, attending at the office at the appointed hours.’

‘And what do you do there?’

‘Whatever I am ordered.’

‘And nothing else?’

‘Oh, yes! sometimes I read a book.’

‘Connected with your profession?’

‘Not always; I have been lately reading Armenian . . .’

‘What’s that?’

‘The language of a people whose country is a region on the other side of Asia Minor.’

‘Well!’

‘A region abounding with mountains.’

‘Well!’

‘Amongst which is Mount Ararat.’

‘Well!’

‘Upon which, as the Bible informs us, the ark rested.’

‘Well!’

‘It is the language of the people of those regions.’

‘So you told me.’

‘And I have been reading the Bible in their language.’

‘Well!’

‘Or rather, I should say, in the ancient language of these people; from which I am told the modern Armenian differs considerably.’

‘Well!’

‘As much as the Italian from the Latin.’

‘Well!’

‘So I have been reading the Bible in ancient Armenian.’

‘You told me so before.’

‘I found it a highly difficult language.’

‘Yes.’

‘Differing widely from the languages in general with which I am acquainted.’

‘Yes.’

‘Exhibiting, however, some features in common with them.’

‘Yes.’

‘And sometimes agreeing remarkably in words with a certain strange wild speech with which I became acquainted ——’

‘Irish?’

‘No, father, not Irish — with which I became acquainted by the greatest chance in the world.’

‘Yes.’

‘But of which I need say nothing further at present, and which I should not have mentioned but for that fact.’

‘Well!’

‘Which I consider remarkable.’

‘Yes.’

‘The Armenian is copious.’

‘Is it?’

‘With an alphabet of thirty-nine letters, but it is harsh and guttural.’

‘Yes.’

‘Like the language of most mountainous people — the Armenians call it Haik.’

‘Do they?’

‘And themselves, Haik, also; they are a remarkable people, and, though their original habitation is the Mountain of Ararat, they are to be found, like the Jews, all over the world.’

‘Well!’

‘Well, father, that’s all I can tell you about Haiks, or Armenians.’

‘And what does it all amount to?’

‘Very little, father; indeed, there is very little known about the Armenians; their early history, in particular, is involved in considerable mystery.’

‘And if you knew all that it was possible to know about them, to what would it amount? — to what earthly purpose could you turn it? Have you acquired any knowledge of your profession?’

‘Very little, father.’

‘Very little! Have you acquired all in your power?’

‘I can’t say that I have, father.’

‘And yet it was your duty to have done so. But I see how it is, you have shamefully misused your opportunities; you are like one, who, sent into the field to labour, passes his time in flinging stones at the birds of heaven.’

‘I would scorn to fling a stone at a bird, father.’

‘You know what I mean, and all too well, and this attempt to evade deserved reproof by feigned simplicity is quite in character with your general behaviour. I have ever observed about you a want of frankness, which has distressed me. You never speak of what you are about, your hopes, or your projects, but cover yourself with mystery. I never knew till the present moment that you were acquainted with Armenia.’

‘Because you never asked me, father. There’s nothing to conceal in the matter — I will tell you in a moment how I came to learn Armenian. A lady whom I met at one of Mrs. ——’s parties took a fancy to me, and has done me the honour to allow me to go and see her sometimes. She is the widow of a rich clergyman, and on her husband’s death came to this place to live, bringing her husband’s library with her. I soon found my way to it, and examined every book. Her husband must have been a learned man, for amongst much Greek and Hebrew I found several volumes in Armenian, or relating to the language.’

‘And why did you not tell me of this before?’

‘Because you never questioned me; but I repeat, there is nothing to conceal in the matter. The lady took a fancy to me, and, being fond of the arts, drew my portrait. She said the expression of my countenance put her in mind of Alfieri’s Saul.’

‘And do you still visit her?’

‘No, she soon grew tired of me, and told people that she found me very stupid; she gave me the Armenian books, however.’

‘Saul,’ said my father, musingly, ‘Saul — I am afraid she was only too right there. He disobeyed the commands of his master, and brought down on his head the vengeance of Heaven — he became a maniac, prophesied, and flung weapons about him.’

‘He was, indeed, an awful character — I hope I sha’n’t turn out like him.’

‘God forbid!’ said my father solemnly; ‘but in many respects you are headstrong and disobedient like him. I placed you in a profession, and besought you to make yourself master of it by giving it your undivided attention. This, however, you did not do, you know nothing of it, but tell me that you are acquainted with Armenian; but what I dislike most is your want of candour — you are my son, but I know little of your real history, you may know fifty things for what I am aware; you may know how to shoe a horse, for what I am aware.’

‘Not only to shoe a horse, father, but to make horse-shoes.’

‘Perhaps so,’ said my father; ‘and it only serves to prove what I am just saying, that I know little about you.’

‘But you easily may, my dear father; I will tell you anything that you may wish to know — shall

I inform you how I learnt to make horse-shoes?’

‘No,’ said my father; ‘as you kept it a secret so long, it may as well continue so still. Had you been a frank, open-hearted boy, like one I could name, you would have told me all about it of your own accord. But I now wish to ask you a serious question — What do you propose to do?’

‘To do, father?’

‘Yes! the time for which you were articled to your profession will soon be expired, and I shall be no more.’

‘Do not talk so, my dear father, I have no doubt that you will soon be better.’

‘Do not flatter yourself; I feel that my days are numbered. I am soon going to my rest; and I have need of rest, for I am weary. There, there, don’t weep! Tears will help me as little as they will you. You have not yet answered my question. Tell me what you intend to do?’

‘I really do not know what I shall do.’

‘The military pension which I enjoy will cease with my life. The property which I shall leave behind me will be barely sufficient for the maintenance of your mother respectably. I again ask you what you intend to do. Do you think you can support yourself by your Armenian or your other acquirements?’

‘Alas! I think little at all about it; but I suppose I must push into the world and make a good fight,

as becomes the son of him who fought Big Ben.'

The brave old soldier yielded up his soul not many days after this interview, and I was obliged to answer his question in the great world.

CHAPTER XIV

‘ONE-AND-NINEPENCE, sir, or the things which you have brought with you will be taken away from you!’

Such were the first words which greeted my ears one damp misty morning in March as I dismounted from the top of a coach in the yard of a London inn.

I turned round, for I felt that the words were addressed to myself. Plenty of people were in the yard — porters, passengers, coachmen, ostlers, and others, who appeared to be intent on anything but myself, with the exception of one individual, whose business appeared to lie with me, and who now confronted me at the distance of about two yards.

I looked hard at the man — and a queer kind of individual he was to look at — a rakish figure, about thirty, and of the middle size, dressed in a coat smartly cut, but threadbare, very tight pantaloons of blue stuff, tied at the ankles, dirty white stockings, and thin shoes, like those of a dancing-master; his features were not ugly, but rather haggard, and he appeared to owe his complexion less to nature than carmine — in fact, in every respect a very queer figure.

‘One-and-ninepence, sir, or your things will be taken away from you!’ he said, in a kind of lisping tone, coming yet nearer to me.

I still remained staring fixedly at him, but never a word answered. Our eyes met; whereupon he suddenly lost the easy impudent air which he before wore. He glanced for a moment at my fist, which I had by this time clenched, and his features became yet more haggard; he faltered; a fresh 'one-and-ninepence,' which he was about to utter, died on his lips; he shrank back, disappeared behind a coach, and I saw no more of him.

'One-and-ninepence, or my things will be taken away from me!' said I to myself, musingly, as I followed the porter to whom I had delivered my scanty baggage. 'Am I to expect many of these greetings in the big world? Well, never mind. I think I know the counter sign!' And I clenched my fist yet harder than before.

So I followed the porter through the streets of London to a lodging which had been prepared for me by an acquaintance. The morning, as I have before said, was gloomy, and the streets through which I passed were dank and filthy; the people, also, looked dank and filthy; and so, probably, did I, for the night had been rainy, and I had come upwards of a hundred miles on the top of a coach. My heart had sunk within me by the time we reached a dark narrow street in which was the lodging.

'Cheer up, young man,' said the porter, 'we shall have a fine afternoon!'

And presently I found myself in the lodging

which had been prepared for me. It consisted of a small room, up two pair of stairs, in which I was to sit, and another still smaller above it, in which I was to sleep. I remember that I sat down, and looked disconsolately about me — everything seemed so cold and dingy. Yet how little is required to make a situation — however cheerless at first sight — cheerful and comfortable. The people of the house, who looked kindly upon me, lighted a fire in the dingy grate; and then, what a change! — the dingy room seemed dingy no more! Oh, the luxury of a cheerful fire after a chill night's journey! I drew near to the blazing grate, rubbed my hands, and felt glad.

And, when I had warmed myself, I turned to the table, on which, by this time, the people of the house had placed my breakfast; and I ate and I drank; and, as I ate and drank, I mused within myself, and my eyes were frequently directed to a small green box, which constituted part of my luggage, and which, with the rest of my things, stood in one corner of the room, till at last, leaving my breakfast unfinished, I rose, and, going to the box, unlocked it, and took out two or three bundles of papers tied with red tape, and, placing them on the table, I resumed my seat and my breakfast, my eyes intently fixed upon the bundles of papers all the time.

And when I had drained the last cup of tea out of a dingy teapot, and ate the last slice of the dingy

loaf, I untied one of the bundles, and proceeded to look over the papers, which were closely written over in a singular hand, and I read for some time till at last I said to myself, 'It will do.' And then I looked at the other bundle for some time, without untying it; and at last I said, 'It will do also.' And then I turned to the fire, and, putting my feet against the sides of the grate, I leaned back on my chair, and, with my eyes upon the fire, fell into deep thought.

And there I continued in thought before the fire, until my eyes closed, and I fell asleep; which was not to be wondered at, after the fatigue and cold which I had lately undergone on the coach-top; and, in my sleep, I imagined myself still there, amidst darkness and rain, hurrying now over wild heaths, and now along roads overhung with thick and umbrageous trees, and sometimes methought I heard the horn of the guard, and sometimes the voice of the coachman, now chiding, now encouraging his horses, as they toiled through the deep and miry ways. At length a tremendous crack of a whip saluted the tympanum of my ear, and I started up broad awake, nearly oversetting the chair on which I inclined — and, lo! I was in the dingy room before the fire, which was by this time half extinguished. In my dream I had confounded the noise of the street with those of my night-journey; the crack which had aroused me I soon found pro-

ceeded from the whip of a carter, who, with many oaths, was flogging his team below the window.

Looking at a clock which stood upon the mantelpiece, I perceived that it was past eleven; whereupon I said to myself, 'I am wasting my time foolishly and unprofitably, forgetting that I am now in the big world, without anything to depend upon save my own exertions.' And then, locking up the bundle of papers which I had not read, I tied up the other, and, taking it under my arm, I went downstairs; and, after asking a question or two of the people of the house, I sallied forth into the street with a determined look, though at heart I felt somewhat timorous at the idea of venturing out alone into the mazes of the mighty city, of which I had heard much, but of which, of my own knowledge, I knew nothing.

I had, however, no great cause for anxiety in the present instance; I easily found my way to the place which I was in quest of — one of the many new squares on the northern side of the metropolis, and which was scarcely ten minutes' walk from the street in which I had taken up my abode. Arriving before the door of a tolerably large house which bore a certain number, I stood still for a moment in a kind of trepidation, looking anxiously at the door. I then slowly passed on till I came to the end of the square, where I stood still and pondered for a while. Suddenly, however, like one who has formed a reso-

lution, I clenched my right hand, flinging my hat somewhat on one side, and, turning back with haste to the door before which I had stopped, I sprang up the steps, and gave a loud rap, ringing at the same time the bell of the area. After the lapse of a minute the door was opened by a maid-servant of no very cleanly or prepossessing appearance, of whom I demanded, in a tone of some hauteur, whether the master of the house was at home. Glancing for a moment at the white paper bundle beneath my arm, the handmaid made no reply in words, but, with a kind of toss of her head, flung the door open, standing on one side as if to let me enter. I did enter; and the handmaid, having opened another door on the right hand, went in and said something which I could not hear. After a considerable pause, however, I heard the voice of a man say, 'Let him come in'; whereupon the handmaid, coming out, motioned me to enter, and, on my obeying, instantly closed the door behind me.

There were two individuals in the room in which I now found myself; it was a small study, surrounded with book-cases, the window looking out upon the square. Of these individuals he who appeared to be the principal stood with his back to the fireplace. He was a tall, stout man, about sixty, dressed in a loose morning-gown. The expression of his countenance would have been bluff but for a certain sinister 'glance, and his complexion might have



I STOOD STILL FOR A MOMENT IN A KIND OF TREPIDATION

been called rubicund but for a considerable tinge of bilious yellow. He eyed me askance as I entered. The other, a pale, shrivelled-looking person, sat at a table apparently engaged with an account-book; he took no manner of notice of me, never once lifting his eyes from the page before him.

‘Well, sir, what is your pleasure?’ said the big man, in a rough tone, as I stood there, looking at him wistfully — as well I might — for upon that man, at the time of which I am speaking, my principal, I may say my only hopes, rested.

‘Sir,’ said I, ‘my name is So-and-so, and I am the bearer of a letter to you from Mr. So-and-so, an old friend and correspondent of yours.’

The countenance of the big man instantly lost the suspicious and lowering expression which it had hitherto exhibited; he strode forward and, seizing me by the hand, gave me a violent squeeze.

‘My dear sir,’ said he, ‘I am rejoiced to see you in London. I have been long anxious for the pleasure — we are old friends, though we have never before met. Taggart,’ said he to the man who sat at the desk, ‘this is our excellent correspondent, the friend and pupil of our excellent correspondent.’

The pale, shrivelled-looking man slowly and deliberately raised his head from the account-book, and surveyed me for a moment or two; not the slightest emotion was observable in his countenance. It appeared to me, however, that I could

detect a droll twinkle in his eye; his curiosity, if he had any, was soon gratified; he made me a kind of bow, pulled out a snuff-box, took a pinch of snuff, and again bent his head over the page.

‘And now, my dear sir,’ said the big man, ‘pray sit down, and tell me the cause of your visit. I hope you intend to remain here a day or two.’

‘More than that,’ said I, ‘I am come to take up my abode in London.’

‘Glad to hear it; and what have you been about of late? Got anything which will suit me? Sir, I admire your style of writing, and your manner of thinking; and I am much obliged to my good friend and correspondent for sending me some of your productions. I inserted them all, and wish there had been more of them. Quite original, sir, quite; took with the public, especially the essay about the non-existence of anything. I don’t exactly agree with you, though; I have my own peculiar ideas about matter — as you know, of course, from the book I have published. Nevertheless, a very pretty piece of speculative philosophy — no such thing as matter — impossible that there should be — *ex nihilo* — what is the Greek? I have forgot — very pretty, indeed; very original.’

‘I am afraid, sir, it was very wrong to write such trash, and yet more to allow it to be published.’

‘Trash! not at all; a very pretty piece of speculative philosophy. Of course you were wrong in

saying there is no world. The world must exist, to have the shape of a pear; and that the world is shaped like a pear, and not like an apple, as the fools of Oxford say, I have satisfactorily proved in my book. Now, if there were no world, what would become of my system? But what do you propose to do in London?’

‘Here is the letter, sir,’ said I, ‘of our good friend, which I have not yet given to you; I believe it will explain to you the circumstances under which I come.’

He took the letter and perused it with attention. ‘Hem,’ said he, with a somewhat altered manner, ‘my friend tells me that you are come up to London with the view of turning your literary talents to account, and desires me to assist you in my capacity of publisher in bringing forth two or three works which you have prepared. My good friend is perhaps not aware that for some time past I have given up publishing — was obliged to do so — had many severe losses — do nothing at present in that line, save sending out the Magazine once a month; and, between ourselves, am thinking of disposing of that — wish to retire — high time at my age — so you see ——’

‘I am very sorry, sir, to hear that you cannot assist me’ (and I remember that I felt very nervous); ‘I had hoped ——’

‘A losing trade, I assure you, sir; literature is a drug. Taggart, what o’clock is it?’

‘Well, sir!’ said I, rising, ‘as you cannot assist me, I will now take my leave; I thank you sincerely for your kind reception, and will trouble you no longer.’

‘Oh, don’t go. I wish to have some further conversation with you, and perhaps I may hit upon some plan to benefit you. I honour merit, and always make a point to encourage it when I can; but, —— Taggart, go to the bank, and tell them to dishonour the bill twelve months after date for thirty pounds which becomes due to-morrow. I am dissatisfied with that fellow who wrote the fairy tales, and intend to give him all the trouble in my power. Make haste.’

Taggart did not appear to be in any particular haste. First of all, he took a pinch of snuff, then, rising from his chair, slowly and deliberately drew his wig, for he wore a wig of a brown colour, rather more over his head than it had previously been, buttoned his coat, and, taking his hat and an umbrella which stood in a corner, made me a low bow, and quitted the room.

‘Well, sir, where were we? Oh, I remember, we were talking about merit. Sir, I always wish to encourage merit, especially when it comes so highly recommended as in the present instance. Sir, my good friend and correspondent speaks of you in the highest terms. Sir, I honour my good friend, and have the highest respect for his opinion in all mat-

ters connected with literature — rather eccentric though. Sir, my good friend has done my periodical more good and more harm than all the rest of my correspondents. Sir, I shall never forget the sensation caused by the appearance of his article about a certain personage whom he proved — and I think satisfactorily — to have been a legionary soldier — rather startling, was it not? The S — of the world a common soldier, in a marching regiment — original, but startling. Sir, I honour my good friend.'

'So you have renounced publishing, sir,' said I, 'with the exception of the Magazine?'

'Why, yes; except now and then, under the rose; the old coachman, you know, likes to hear the whip. Indeed, at the present moment, I am thinking of starting a Review on an entirely new and original principle; and it just struck me that you might be of high utility in the undertaking — what do you think of the matter?'

'I should be happy, sir, to render you any assistance, but I am afraid the employment you propose requires other qualifications than I possess; however, I can make the essay. My chief intention in coming to London was to lay before the world what I had prepared; and I had hoped by your assistance ——'

'Ah! I see, ambition! Ambition is a very pretty thing; but, sir, we must walk before we run, accord-

ing to the old saying. What is that you have got under your arm?’

‘One of the works to which I was alluding; the one, indeed, which I am most anxious to lay before the world, as I hope to derive from it both profit and reputation.’

‘Indeed! what do you call it?’

‘Ancient songs of Denmark, heroic and romantic, translated by myself; with notes philological, critical, and historical.’

‘Then, sir, I assure you that your time and labour have been entirely flung away; nobody would read your ballads, if you were to give them to the world to-morrow.’

‘I am sure, sir, that you would say otherwise, if you would permit me to read one to you’; and without waiting for the big man, nor indeed so much as looking at him, to see whether he was inclined or not to hear me, I undid my manuscript, and with a voice trembling with eagerness, I read to the following effect:

‘Buckshank bold and Elfinstone,
And many other fellows tall,
Together built so stout a ship,
To Iceland which should bear them all.

‘They launched the ship upon the main,
Which like a hungry monster roared;
Whelmed by the laidly ocean Troid,
The good ship sank with all on board.

‘Down to the bottom sank young Roland,
And round about he groped awhile;
Until he found the path which led
Unto the bower of Ellenlyle.’

‘Stop!’ said the publisher. ‘Very pretty indeed, and very original — beats Scott hollow, and Percy too; but sir, the day for these things is gone by. Nobody at present cares for Percy, nor for Scott either, save as a novelist. Sorry to discourage merit, sir, but what can I do? What else have you got?’

‘The songs of Ab Gwilym, the Welsh bard, also translated by myself, with notes critical, philological, and historical.’

‘Pass on — what else?’

‘Nothing else,’ said I, folding up my manuscript with a sigh, ‘unless it be a romance in the German style; on which, I confess, I set very little value.’

‘Wild?’

‘Yes, sir, very wild.’

‘Like the Miller of the Black Valley.’

‘Yes, sir, very much like the Miller of the Black Valley.’

‘Well, that’s better,’ said the publisher; ‘and yet, I don’t know, I question whether any one at present cares for the miller himself. No, sir, the time for those things is gone by; German, at the present, is a drug; and, between ourselves, nobody has contributed to make it so more than my good friend

and correspondent. But, sir, I see you are a young gentleman of infinite merit, and I always wish to encourage merit. Don't you think you could write a series of evangelical tales?'

'Evangelical tales, sir?'

'Yes, sir, evangelical novels.'

'Something in the style of Herder?'

'Herder is a drug, sir; nobody cares for Herder — thanks to my good friend. Sir, I have in yon drawer a hundred pages about Herder, which I dare not insert in my periodical; it would sink it, sir. No, sir, something in the style of the *Dairyman's Daughter*.'

'I never heard of the work till the present moment.'

'Then, sir, procure it by all means. Sir, I could afford as much as ten pounds for a well-written tale in the style of the *Dairyman's Daughter*; that is the kind of literature, sir, that sells at the present day! It is not the Miller of the Black Valley — no, sir, nor Herder either, that will suit the present taste; the evangelical body is becoming very strong, sir; the canting scoundrels ——'

'But, sir, surely you would not pander to a scoundrelly taste?'

'Then, sir, I must give up business altogether. Sir, I have a great respect for the goddess Reason — an infinite respect, sir; indeed, in my time, I have made a great many sacrifices for her: but, sir, I can-

not altogether ruin myself for the goddess Reason. Sir, I am a friend to Liberty, as is well known; but I must also be a friend to my own family. It is with the view of providing for a son of mine that I am about to start the Review of which I am speaking. He has taken it into his head to marry, sir, and I must do something for him, for he can do but little for himself. Well, sir, I am a friend to Liberty, as I said before, and likewise a friend to Reason; but I tell you frankly that the Review which I intend to get up under the rose, and present him with when it is established, will be conducted on Oxford principles.'

'Orthodox principles, I suppose you mean, sir?'

'I do, sir; I am no linguist, but I believe the words are synonymous.'

Much more conversation passed between us, and it was agreed that I should become a contributor to the Oxford Review. I stipulated, however, that, as I knew little of politics, and cared less, no other articles should be required from me than such as were connected with belles-lettres and philology. To this the big man readily assented. 'Nothing will be required from you,' said he, 'but what you mention; and now and then perhaps a paper on metaphysics. You understand German, and perhaps it would be desirable that you should review Kant; and in a review of Kant, sir, you could introduce to advantage your peculiar notions about *ex nihilo*.' He then reverted to the subject of the

Dairyman's Daughter, which I promised to take into consideration. As I was going away, he invited me to dine with him on the ensuing Sunday.

‘That’s a strange man!’ said I to myself, after I had left the house. ‘He is evidently very clever; but I cannot say that I like him much, with his *Oxford Reviews* and *Dairyman's Daughters*. But what can I do? I am almost without a friend in the world. I wish I could find someone who would publish my ballads, or my songs of Ab Gwilym. In spite of what the big man says, I am convinced that, once published, they would bring me much fame and profit. But how is this?’— what a beautiful sun! The porter was right in saying that the day would clear up. I will now go to my dingy lodging, lock up my manuscripts, and then take a stroll about the big city.’

CHAPTER XV

FOR some months I continued to labor for the publisher. I contributed to his Review conducted on Oxford principles; I compiled a great volume of Newgate Lives and Trials, dug forth from musty books long unread; I translated the works of the publisher into German. And for all this I received only promissory notes in payment, so that I was not infrequently distressed for want of money.

One day, on visiting the publisher, I found him stamping with fury upon certain fragments of paper.

‘Sir,’ said he, ‘you know nothing of German. I have shown your translation of the first chapter of my Philosophy to several Germans: it is utterly unintelligible to them.’ ‘Did they see the Philosophy?’ I replied. ‘They did, sir, but they did not profess to understand English.’ ‘No more do I,’ I replied, ‘if that Philosophy be English.’

The publisher was furious — I was silent. For want of a pinch of snuff, I had recourse to something which is no bad substitute for a pinch of snuff to those who can’t take it, silent contempt; at first it made the publisher more furious, as perhaps a pinch of snuff would; it, however, eventually calmed him, and he ordered me back to my occupations, in

other words, the compilation. To be brief, the compilation was completed, I got paid in the usual manner, and forthwith left him.

He was a clever man, but what a difference in clever men!

I departed from that house, and went toward the open country, relief in my heart at being rid of the publisher, although in losing him I lost my only means of living.

And, as I wandered along the green, I drew near to a place where several men, with a cask beside them, sat carousing in the neighbourhood of a small tent. 'Here he comes,' said one of them as I advanced, and, standing up, he raised his voice and sang:

'Here the Gipsy gemman see,
With his Roman jib and his rome and dree —
Rome and dree, rum and dry
Rally round the Romany Rye.'

It was Mr. Petulengro, who was here diverting himself with several of his comrades; they all received me with considerable frankness. 'Sit down, brother,' said Mr. Petulengro, 'and take a cup of good ale.'

I sat down. 'Your health, gentlemen!' said I, as I took the cup which Mr. Petulengro handed to me.

'Aukko tu pios adrey Rommanis. Here is your health in Romany, brother,' said Mr. Petulengro, who, having refilled the cup, now emptied it at a draught.

'Your health in Romany, brother,' said Tawno Chikno, to whom the cup came next.

'The Romany Rye,' said a third.

'The Gipsy gentleman,' exclaimed a fourth, drinking.

And then they all sang in chorus:

'Here the Gipsy gemman see,
With his Roman jib and his rome and dree —
Rome and dree, rum and dry
Rally round the Romany Rye.'

'And now, brother,' said Mr. Petulengro, 'seeing that you have drunk and been drunken, you will perhaps tell us where you have been and what about.'

'I have been in the Big City,' said I, 'writing lils.'

'How much money have you got in your pocket, brother?' said Mr. Petulengro.

'Eighteenpence,' said I; 'all I have in the world.'

'I have been in the Big City, too,' said Mr. Petulengro; 'but I have not written lils — I have fought in the ring — I have fifty pounds in my pocket — I have much more in the world. Brother, there is considerable difference between us.'

'I would rather be the lil-writer, after all,' said the tall, handsome, black man; 'indeed, I would wish for nothing better.'

'Why so?' said Mr. Petulengro.

'Because they have so much to say for them-

selves,' said the black man, 'even when dead and gone. When they are laid in the churchyard it is their own fault if people a'n't talking of them. Who will know after I am dead, or bitchadey pawdel, that I was once the beauty of the world, or that you, Jasper, were ——'

'The best man in England of my inches. That's true, Tawno — however, here's our brother will perhaps let the world know something about us.'

'Not he,' said the other, with a sigh; 'he'll have quite enough to do in writing his own lils and telling the world how handsome and clever he was; and who can blame him? Not I. If I could write lils every word should be about myself and my own tacho Rommanis—my own lawful wedded wife, which is the same thing. I tell you what, brother, I once heard a wise man say in Brummagem that "there is nothing like blowing one's own horn," which I conceive to be much the same thing as writing one's own lil.'

After a little more conversation Mr. Petulengro arose and motioned me to follow him. 'Only eighteenpence in the world, brother!' said he as we walked together.

'Nothing more, I assure you. How came you to ask me how much money I had?'

'Because there was something in your look, brother, something very much resembling that which a person showeth who does not carry much

money in his pocket. I was looking at my own face this morning in my wife's looking-glass — I did not look as you do, brother.'

'I believe your sole motive for inquiring,' said I, 'was to have an opportunity of venting a foolish boast, and to let me know that you were in possession of fifty pounds.'

'What is the use of having money unless you let people know you have it?' said Mr. Petulengro. 'It is not everyone can read faces, brother; and, unless you knew I had money, how could you ask me to lend you any?'

'I am not going to ask you to lend me any.'

'Then you may have it without asking; as I said before, I have fifty pounds, all lawfully earned money, got by fighting in the ring — I will lend you that, brother.'

'You are very kind,' said I; 'but I will not take it.'

'Then the half of it?'

'Nor the half of it; but it is getting towards evening, I must go back to the Great City.'

'And what will you do in the Boro Foros?'

'I know not,' said I.

'Earn money?'

'If I can.'

'And if you can't?'

'Starve!'

'You look ill, brother,' said Mr. Petulengro.

'I do not feel well; the Great City does not agree

with me. Should I be so fortunate as to earn some money, I would leave the Big City and take to the woods and fields.'

'You may do that, brother,' said Mr. Petulengro, 'whether you have money or not. Our tents and horses are on the other side of yonder wooded hill, come and stay with us; we shall all be glad of your company, but more especially myself and my wife Pakomovna.'

'What hill is that?' I demanded.

And then Mr. Petulengro told me the name of the hill. 'We stay on t'other side of the hill a fortnight,' he continued; 'and as you are fond of lil writing, you may employ yourself profitably whilst there. You can write the lil of him whose dook gallops down that hill every night, even as the living man was wont to do long ago.'

'Who was he?' I demanded.

'Jemmy Abershaw,' said Mr. Petulengro; 'one of those whom we call Boro drom engroes, and the Gorgios highwaymen. I once heard a rye say that the life of that man would fetch much money; so come to the other side of the hill, and write the lil in the tent of Jasper and his wife Pakomovna.'

At first I felt inclined to accept the invitation of Mr. Petulengro; a little consideration, however, determined me to decline it. I had always been on excellent terms with Mr. Petulengro, but I reflected that people might be excellent friends when they

met occasionally in the street, or on the heath, or in the wood; but that these very people when living together in a house, to say nothing of a tent, might quarrel. I reflected, moreover, that Mr. Petulengro had a wife. I had always, it is true, been a great favourite with Mrs. Petulengro, who had frequently been loud in her commendation of the young rye, as she called me, and his turn of conversation; but this was at a time when I stood in need of nothing, lived under my parents' roof, and only visited at the tents to divert and to be diverted. The times were altered, and I was by no means certain that Mrs. Petulengro, when she should discover that I was in need both of shelter and subsistence, might not alter her opinion both with respect to the individual and what he said — stigmatising my conversation as saucy discourse, and myself as a scurvy companion; and that she might bring over her husband to her own way of thinking, provided, indeed, he should need any conducting. I therefore, though without declaring my reasons, declined the offer of Mr. Petulengro, and presently, after shaking him by the hand, bent again my course towards the Great City.

I crossed the river at a bridge considerably above that hight of London; for, not being acquainted with the way, I missed the turning which should have brought me to the latter. Suddenly I found myself in a street of which I had some recollection, and

mechanically stopped before the window of a shop at which various publications were exposed; it was that of a bookseller to whom I had applied in the hope of selling my ballads or *Ab Gwilym*, and who had given me hopes that, in the event of my writing a decent novel, or a tale, he would prove a purchaser. As I stood listlessly looking at the window, and the publications which it contained, I observed a paper affixed to the glass by wafers with something written upon it. I drew yet nearer for the purpose of inspecting it; the writing was in a fair round hand — ‘A Novel or Tale is much wanted’ was what was written.

CHAPTER XVI

‘I MUST do something,’ said I, as I sat that night in my lonely apartment, with some bread and a pitcher of water before me.

Thereupon taking some of the bread, and eating it, I considered what I was to do. ‘I have no idea what I am to do,’ said I, as I stretched my hand towards the pitcher, ‘unless’ — and here I took a considerable draught — ‘I write a tale or a novel —— That bookseller,’ I continued, speaking to myself, ‘is certainly much in need of a tale or a novel, otherwise he would not advertise for one. Suppose I write one, I appear to have no other chance of extricating myself from my present difficulties; surely it was Fate that conducted me to his window.’

‘I will do it,’ said I, as I struck my hand against the table; ‘I will do it.’ Suddenly a heavy cloud of despondency came over me. Could I do it? Had I the imagination requisite to write a tale or a novel? ‘Yes, yes,’ said I, as I struck my hand again against the table, ‘I can manage it; give me fair play and I can accomplish anything.’

But should I have fair play? I must have something to maintain myself with whilst I wrote my tale, and I had but eighteenpence in the world. Would that maintain me whilst I wrote my tale?

Yes, I thought it would, provided I ate bread, which did not cost much, and drank water, which cost nothing; it was poor diet, it was true, but better men than myself had written on bread and water.

It was true there was my lodging to pay for; but up to the present time I owed nothing, and perhaps, by the time the people of the house asked me for money, I should have written a tale or a novel, which would bring me in money; I had paper, pens, and ink, and, let me not forget them, I had candles in my closet, all paid for, to light me during my night work. Enough, I would go doggedly to work upon my tale or novel.

But what was the tale or novel to be about? Was it to be a tale of fashionable life, about Sir Harry Somebody, and the Countess Something? But I knew nothing about fashionable people, and cared less; therefore how should I attempt to describe fashionable life? What should the tale consist of? The life and adventures of some one. Good — but of whom? Did not Mr. Petulengro mention one Jemmy Abershaw? Yes. Did he not tell me that the life and adventures of Jemmy Abershaw would bring in much money to the writer? Yes, but I knew nothing of that worthy. I heard, it is true, from Mr. Petulengro, that when alive he committed robberies on the hill, on the side of which Mr. Petulengro had pitched his tents, and that his ghost still haunted the hill at midnight; but those were scant

materials out of which to write the man's life. It is probable, indeed, that Mr. Petulengro would be able to supply me with further materials if I should apply to him, but I was in a hurry, and could not afford the time which it would be necessary to spend in passing to and from Mr. Petulengro, and consulting him. Moreover, my pride revolted at the idea of being beholden to Mr. Petulengro for the materials of the history. No, I would not write the history of Abershaw. Whose then — Harry Simms? Alas, the life of Harry Simms had been already much better written by himself than I could hope to do it; and, after all, Harry Simms, like Jemmy Abershaw, was merely a robber. Both, though bold and extraordinary men, were merely highwaymen. I questioned whether I could compose a tale likely to excite any particular interest out of the exploits of a mere robber. I want a character for my hero, thought I, something higher than a mere robber; some one like — like Colonel B——. By the way, why should I not write the life and adventures of Colonel B—— of Londonderry, in Ireland?

A truly singular man was this same Colonel B—— of Londonderry, in Ireland; a personage of strange and incredible feats and daring, who had been a partizan soldier, a bravo — who, assisted by certain discontented troopers, nearly succeeded in stealing the crown and regalia from the Tower of London; who attempted to hang the Duke of Or-

mond at Tyburn; and whose strange eventful career did not terminate even with his life, his dead body, on the circulation of an unfounded report that he did not come to his death by fair means, having been exhumed by the mob of his native place, where he had retired to die, and carried in a coffin through the streets.

Of his life I had inserted an account in the *Newgate Lives and Trials*; it was bare and meagre, and written in the stiff awkward style of the seventeenth century; it had, however, strongly captivated my imagination, and I now thought that out of it something better could be made; that, if I added to the adventures, and purified the style, I might fashion out of it a very decent tale or novel. On a sudden, however, the proverb of mending old garments with new cloth occurred to me. 'I am afraid,' said I, 'any new adventure which I can invent will not fadge well with the old tale; one will but spoil the other.' I had better have nothing to do with Colonel B——, thought I, but boldly and independently sit down and write the life of Joseph Sell.

This Joseph Sell, dear reader, was a fictitious personage who had just come into my head. I had never even heard of the name, but just at that moment it happened to come into my head; I would write an entirely fictitious narrative, called the *Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell, the great traveller*.



I SEIZED PEN AND PAPER, AND FORTHWITH ESSAYED TO WRITE
THE LIFE OF JOSEPH SELL

I had better begin at once, thought I; and removing the bread and the jug, which latter was now empty, I seized pen and paper, and forthwith essayed to write the life of Joseph Sell, but soon discovered that it was much easier to resolve upon a thing than to achieve it, or even to commence it; for the life of me I did not know how to begin, and, after trying in vain to write a line, I thought it would be as well to go to bed, and defer my projected undertaking till the morrow.

So I went to bed, but not to sleep. During the greater part of the night I lay awake, musing upon the work which I had determined to execute. For a long time my brain was dry and unproductive; I could form no plan which appeared feasible. At length I felt within my brain a kindly glow; it was the commencement of inspiration; in a few minutes I had formed my plan; I then began to imagine the scenes and the incidents. Scenes and incidents floated before my mind's eye so plentifully, that I knew not how to dispose of them; I was in a regular embarrassment. At length I got out of the difficulty in the easiest manner imaginable, namely, by consigning to the depths of oblivion all the feebler and less stimulant scenes and incidents, and retaining the better and more impressive ones. Before morning I had sketched the whole work on the tablets of my mind, and then resigned myself to sleep in the pleasing conviction that the most difficult part of my undertaking was achieved.

Rather late in the morning I awoke; for a few minutes I lay still, perfectly still; my imagination was considerably sobered; the scenes and situations which had pleased me so much over night appeared to me in a far less captivating guise that morning. I felt languid and almost hopeless — the thought, however, of my situation soon roused me, — I must make an effort to improve the posture of my affairs; there was no time to be lost; so I sprang out of bed, breakfasted on bread and water, and then sat down doggedly to write the life of Joseph Sell.

It was a great thing to have formed my plan, and to have arranged the scenes in my head, as I had done on the preceding night. The chief thing requisite at present was the mere mechanical act of committing them to paper. This I did not find at first so easy as I could wish — I wanted mechanical skill; but I persevered; and before evening I had written ten pages. I partook of some bread and water; and, before I went to bed that night, I had completed fifteen pages of my life of Joseph Sell.

The next day I resumed my task — I found my power of writing considerably increased; my pen hurried rapidly over the paper — my brain was in a wonderfully teeming state; many scenes and visions which I had not thought of before were evolved, and, as fast as evolved, written down; they seemed to be more pat to my purpose, and more natural to my history, than many others which I had imag-

ined before, and which I made now give place to these newer creations: by about midnight I had added thirty fresh pages to my *Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell*.

The third day arose — it was dark and dreary out of doors, and I passed it drearily enough within; my brain appeared to have lost much of its former glow, and my pen much of its power; I, however, toiled on, but at midnight had only added seven pages to my history of Joseph Sell.

On the fourth day the sun shone brightly — I arose, and, having breakfasted as usual, I fell to work. My brain was this day wonderfully prolific, and my pen never before or since glided so rapidly over the paper; towards night I began to feel strangely about the back of my head, and my whole system was extraordinarily affected. I likewise occasionally saw double — a tempter now seemed to be at work within me.

‘You had better leave off now for a short space,’ said the tempter, ‘and go out and drink a pint of beer; you have still one shilling left — if you go on at this rate, you will go mad — go out and spend sixpence, you can afford it, more than half your work is done.’ I was about to obey the suggestion of the tempter, when the idea struck me that, if I did not complete the work whilst the fit was on me, I should never complete it; so I held on. I am almost afraid to state how many pages I wrote that day of the life of Joseph Sell.

From this time I proceeded in a somewhat more leisurely manner; but, as I drew nearer and nearer to the completion of my task, dreadful fears and despondencies came over me. It will be too late, thought I; by the time I have finished the work, the bookseller will have been supplied with a tale or a novel. Is it probable that, in a town like this, where talent is so abundant — hungry talent too — a bookseller can advertise for a tale or a novel, without being supplied with half a dozen in twenty-four hours? I may as well fling down my pen — I am writing to no purpose. And these thoughts came over my mind so often, that at last, in utter despair, I flung down the pen. Whereupon the tempter within me said — ‘And, now you have flung down the pen, you may as well fling yourself out of the window; what remains for you to do?’ Why, to take it up again, thought I to myself, for I did not like the latter suggestion at all — and then forthwith I resumed the pen, and wrote with greater vigour than before, from about six o’clock in the evening until I could hardly see, when I rested for awhile, when the tempter within me again said, or appeared to say — ‘All you have been writing is stuff, it will never do — a drug — a mere drug’; and methought these last words were uttered in the gruff tones of the big publisher. ‘A thing merely to be sneezed at,’ a voice like that of Taggart added; and then I seemed to hear a sternu-

tation — as I probably did, for, recovering from a kind of swoon, I found myself shivering with cold. The next day I brought my work to a conclusion.

But the task of revision still remained; for an hour or two I shrank from it, and I remained gazing stupidly at the pile of paper which I had written over. I was all but exhausted, and I dreaded, on inspecting the sheets, to find them full of absurdities which I had paid no regard to in the furor of composition. But the task, however trying to my nerves, must be got over; at last, in a kind of desperation, I entered upon it. It was far from an easy one; there were, however, fewer errors and absurdities than I had anticipated. About twelve o'clock at night I had got over the task of revision. 'Tomorrow, for the bookseller,' said I, as my head sank on the pillow. 'Oh me!'

On arriving at the bookseller's shop, I cast a nervous look at the window, for the purpose of observing whether the paper had been removed or not. To my great delight the paper was in its place; with a beating heart I entered, there was nobody in the shop; as I stood at the counter, however, deliberating whether or not I should call out, the door of what seemed to be a back-parlour opened, and out came a well-dressed lady-like female, of about thirty, with a good-looking and intelligent countenance. 'What is your business, young man?' said she to me, after I had made her a polite bow. 'I

wish to speak to the gentleman of the house,' said I. 'My husband is not within at present,' she replied; 'what is your business?' 'I have merely brought something to show him,' said I; 'but I will call again.' 'If you are the young gentleman who has been here before,' said the lady, 'with poems and ballads, as, indeed, I know you are,' she added, smiling, 'for I have seen you through the glass door, I am afraid it will be useless; that is,' she added with another smile, 'if you bring us nothing else.' 'I have not brought you poems and ballads now,' said I, 'but something widely different; I saw your advertisement for a tale or a novel, and have written something which I think will suit; and here it is,' I added showing the roll of paper which I held in my hand. 'Well,' said the bookseller's wife, 'you may leave it, though I cannot promise you much chance of its being accepted. My husband has already had several offered to him; however, you may leave it; give it me. Are you afraid to intrust it to me?' she demanded, somewhat hastily, observing that I hesitated. 'Excuse me,' said I, 'but it is all I have to depend upon in the world; I am chiefly apprehensive that it will not be read.' 'On that point I can reassure you,' said the good lady, smiling, and there was now something sweet in her smile. 'I give you my word that it shall be read; come again to-morrow morning at eleven, when, if not approved, it shall be returned to you.'

I returned to my lodging, and forthwith betook myself to bed, notwithstanding the earliness of the hour. I felt tolerably tranquil; I had now cast my last stake, and was prepared to abide by the result. Whatever that result might be, I could have nothing to reproach myself with; I had strained all the energies which nature had given me in order to rescue myself from the difficulties which surrounded me. I presently sank into a sleep, which endured during the remainder of the day, and the whole of the succeeding night. I awoke about nine on the morrow, and spent my last threepence on a breakfast somewhat more luxurious than the immediately preceding ones, for one penny of the sum was expended on the purchase of milk.

At the appointed hour I repaired to the house of the bookseller; the bookseller was in his shop. 'Ah,' said he, as soon as I entered, 'I am glad to see you.' There was an unwonted heartiness in the bookseller's tones, an unwonted benignity in his face. 'So,' said he, after a pause, 'you have taken my advice, written a book of adventure; nothing like taking the advice, young man, of your superiors in age. Well, I think your book will do, and so does my wife, for whose judgment I have a great regard; as well I may, as she is the daughter of a first-rate novelist, deceased. I think I shall venture on sending your book to the press.' 'But,' said I, 'we have not yet agreed upon terms.' 'Terms, terms,' said the book-

seller; 'Ahem! well, there is nothing like coming to terms at once. I will print the book, and give you half the profit when the edition is sold.' 'That will not do,' said I; 'I intend shortly to leave London: I must have something at once.' 'Ah, I see,' said the bookseller, 'in distress; frequently the case with authors, especially young ones. Well, I don't care if I purchase it of you, but you must be moderate; the public are very fastidious, and the speculation may prove a losing one, after all. Let me see, will five — hem' — he stopped. I looked the bookseller in the face; there was something peculiar in it. Suddenly it appeared to me as if a voice sounded in my ear, 'Now is your time, ask enough, never such another chance of establishing yourself.'

'Well,' said I at last, 'I have no objection to take the offer which you were about to make, though I really think five-and-twenty guineas to be scarcely enough, everything considered.' 'Five-and-twenty guineas!' said the bookseller; 'are you — what was I going to say — I never meant to offer half as much — I mean a quarter; I was going to say five guineas — I mean pounds; I will, however, make it up guineas.' 'That will not do,' said I; 'but, as I find we shall not deal, return me my manuscript, that I may carry it to someone else.' The bookseller looked blank. 'Dear me,' said he, 'I should never have supposed that you would have made any objection to such an offer; I am quite sure that

you would have been glad to take five pounds for either of the two huge manuscripts of songs and ballads that you brought me on a former occasion.' 'Well,' said I, 'if you will engage to publish either of those manuscripts, you shall have the present one for five pounds.' 'God forbid that I should make any such bargain,' said the bookseller; 'I would publish neither on any account; but, with respect to this last book, I have really an inclination to print it, both for your sake and mine; suppose we say ten pounds.' 'No,' said I, 'ten pounds will not do; pray restore me my manuscript.' 'Stay,' said the bookseller, 'my wife is in the next room, I will go and consult her.' Thereupon he went into his back room, where I heard him conversing with his wife in a low tone; in about ten minutes he returned. 'Young gentleman,' said he, 'perhaps you will take tea with us this evening, when we will talk further over the matter.'

That evening I went and took tea with the bookseller and his wife, both of whom, particularly the latter, overwhelmed me with civility. It was not long before I learned that the work had been already sent to the press, and was intended to stand at the head of a series of entertaining narratives, from which my friends promised themselves considerable profit. The subject of terms was again brought forward. I stood firm to my first demand for a long time; when, however, the bookseller's wife compli-

mented me on my production in the highest terms, and said that she discovered therein the germs of genius, which she made no doubt would some day prove ornamental to my native land, I consented to drop my demand to twenty pounds, stipulating, however, that I should not be troubled with the correction of the work.

Before I departed I received the twenty pounds, and departed with a light heart to my lodgings.

Reader, amidst the difficulties and dangers of this life, should you ever be tempted to despair, call to mind these latter chapters of the life of Lavengro. There are few positions, however difficult, from which dogged resolution and perseverance may not liberate you.

CHAPTER XVII

I HAD long ago determined to leave London as soon as the means should be in my power, and, now that they were, I determined to leave the Great City; yet I felt some reluctance to go. I would fain have pursued the career of original authorship which had just opened itself to me, and have written other tales of adventure. The bookseller had given me encouragement enough to do so; he had assured me that he should be always happy to deal with me for an article (that was the word) similar to the one I had brought him, provided my terms were moderate; and the bookseller's wife, by her complimentary language, had given me yet more encouragement. But for some months past I had been far from well, and my original indisposition, brought on partly by the peculiar atmosphere of the Big City, partly by anxiety of mind, had been much increased by the exertions which I had been compelled to make during the last few days. I felt that, were I to remain where I was, I should die, or become a confirmed valetudinarian. I would go forth into the country, travelling on foot, and, by exercise and inhaling pure air, endeavour to recover my health, leaving my subsequent movements to be determined by Providence.

But whither should I bend my course? Once or twice I thought of walking home to the old town, stay some time with my mother and my brother, and enjoy the pleasant walks in the neighbourhood; but, though I wished very much to see my mother and my brother, and felt much disposed to enjoy the pleasant walks, the old town was not exactly the place to which I wished to go at this present juncture. I was afraid the people would ask, Where are your Northern Ballads? Where are your alliterative translations from Ab Gwilym — of which you were always talking, and with which you promised to astonish the world? Now, in the event of such interrogations, what could I answer? It is true I had compiled *Newgate Lives and Trials*, and had written the life of Joseph Sell, but I was afraid that the people of the old town would scarcely consider these as equivalents for the Northern Ballads and the songs of Ab Gwilym. I would go forth and wander in any direction but that of the old town.

Rather late one afternoon I departed from my lodging, with my stick in my hand and a small bundle in the other, shaping my course to the southwest: when I first arrived, somewhat more than a year before, I had entered the city by the northeast. As I was not going home, I determined to take my departure in the direction the very opposite to home.

In about two hours I had cleared the Great City.

For several days I walked the pleasant roads of Old England. At length I found myself near the brow of a lofty hill. Turning to the right, I proceeded along a path which brought me to a causeway leading over a deep ravine, and connecting the hill with another which had once formed part of it, for the ravine was evidently the work of art. I passed over the causeway, and found myself in a kind of gateway which admitted me into a square space of many acres, surrounded on all sides by mounds or ramparts of earth. Though I had never been in such a place before, I knew that I stood within the precincts of what had been a Roman encampment, and one probably of the largest size, for many thousand warriors might have found room to perform their evolutions in that space, in which corn was now growing, the green ears waving in the morning wind.

After I had gazed about the space for a time, standing in the gateway formed by the mounds, I clambered up the mound to the left hand, and on the top of that mound I found myself at a great altitude. Beneath, at the distance of a mile, was a fair old city, situated amongst verdant meadows, watered with streams, and from the heart of that old city, from amidst mighty trees, I beheld, towering to the sky, the finest spire in the world.

After I had looked from the Roman rampart for a long time, I hurried away, and, retracing my steps

along the causeway, regained the road, and, passing over the brow of the hill, descended to the city of the spire.

And in the old city I remained two days, passing my time as I best could — inspecting the curiosities of the place, eating and drinking when I felt so disposed, which I frequently did, the digestive organs having assumed a tone to which for many months they had been strangers — enjoying at night balmy sleep in a large bed in a dusky room, at the end of a corridor, in a certain hostelry in which I had taken up my quarters — receiving from the people of the hostelry such civility and condescension as people who travel on foot with bundle and stick, but who nevertheless are perceived to be not altogether destitute of coin, are in the habit of receiving. On the third day, on a fine sunny afternoon, I departed from the city of the spire.

As I was passing through one of the suburbs, I saw, all on a sudden, a respectable-looking female fall down in a fit. Several persons hastened to her assistance. ‘She is dead,’ said one. ‘No, she is not,’ said another. ‘I am afraid she is,’ said a third. ‘Life is very uncertain,’ said a fourth. ‘It is Mrs. —,’ said a fifth; ‘let us carry her to her own house.’ Not being able to render any assistance, I left the poor female in the hands of her townsfolk, and proceeded on my way. I had chosen a road in the direction of the north-west; it led over downs

where corn was growing, but where neither tree nor hedge were to be seen. Two or three hours' walking brought me to a beautiful valley, abounding with trees of various kinds, with a delightful village at its farthest extremity. Passing through it I ascended a lofty acclivity, on the top of which I sat down on a bank, and taking off my hat, permitted a breeze, which swept coolly and refreshingly over the downs, to dry my hair, dripping from the effects of exercise and the heat of the day.

And as I sat there, gazing now at the blue heavens, now at the downs before me, a man came along the road in the direction in which I had hitherto been proceeding. Just opposite to me he stopped, and, looking at me, cried, 'Am I right for London, master?'

He was dressed like a sailor, and appeared to be between twenty-five and thirty years of age. He had an open, manly countenance, and there was a bold and fearless expression in his eye.

'Yes,' said I, in reply to his question; 'this is one of the ways to London. Do you come from far?'

'From ——,' said the man, naming a well-known sea-port.

'Is this the direct road to London from that place?' I demanded.

'No,' said the man; 'but I had to visit two or three other places on certain commissions I was intrusted with, amongst others to ——, where I had

to take a small sum of money. I am rather tired, master; and, if you please, I will sit down beside you.'

'You have as much right to sit down here as I have,' said I. 'The road is free for everyone. As for sitting down beside me, you have the look of an honest man, and I have no objection to your company.'

'Why, as for being honest, master,' said the man, laughing and sitting down beside me, 'I haven't much to say — many is the wild thing I have done when I was younger; however, what is done, is done. To learn, one must live, master; and I have lived long enough to learn the grand point of wisdom.'

'What is that?' said I.

'That honesty is the best policy, master.'

'You appear to be a sailor,' said I, looking at his dress.

'I was not bred a sailor,' said the man, 'though, when my foot is on the salt water, I can play the part — and play it well too. I am now from a long voyage.'

'From America?' said I.

'Farther than that,' said the man.

'Have you any objection to tell me?' said I.

'From New South Wales,' said the man, looking me full in the face.

'Dear me!' said I.

'Why do you say "Dear me"?' said the man.

‘It is a very long way off,’ said I.

‘Was that your reason for saying so?’ said the man.

‘Not exactly,’ said I.

‘No,’ said the man, with something of a bitter smile. ‘It was something else that made you say so; you were thinking of the convicts.’

‘Well,’ said I, ‘what then? — you are no convict.’

‘How do you know?’

‘You do not look like one.’

‘Thank you, master,’ said the man cheerfully; ‘and, to a certain extent, you are right — by-gones are by-gones — I am no longer what I was, nor ever will be again. The truth, however, is the truth — a convict I have been — a convict at Sydney Cove.’

‘And you have served out the period for which you were sentenced, and are now returned?’

‘As to serving out my sentence,’ replied the man, ‘I can’t say that I did. I was sentenced for fourteen years, and I was in Sydney Cove little more than half that time. The truth is that I did the Government a service. There was a conspiracy amongst some of the convicts to murder and destroy — I overheard and informed the Government. Mind one thing, however, I was not concerned in it; those who got it up were no comrades of mine, but a bloody gang of villains. Well, the Government, in consideration of the service I had

done them, remitted the remainder of my sentence; and some kind gentlemen interested themselves about me, gave me good books and good advice, and, being satisfied with my conduct, procured me employ in an exploring expedition, by which I earned money. In fact, the being sent to Sydney was the best thing that ever happened to me in all my life.'

'And you have now returned to your native country. Longing to see home brought you from New South Wales.'

'There you are mistaken,' said the man. 'Wish to see England again would never have brought me so far; for to tell you the truth, master, England was a hard mother to me, as she has proved to many. No, a wish to see another kind of mother — a poor old woman whose son I am — has brought me back.'

'You have a mother, then,' said I. 'Does she reside in London?'

'She used to live in London,' said the man; 'but I am afraid she is long since dead.'

'How did she support herself?' said I.

'Support herself! with difficulty enough; she used to keep a small stall on London Bridge, where she sold fruit; I am afraid she is dead, and that she died perhaps in misery. She was a poor sinful creature, but I loved her, and she loved me. I came all the way back merely for the chance of seeing her.'

‘Did you ever write to her,’ said I, ‘or cause others to write to her?’

‘I wrote to her myself,’ said the man, ‘about two years ago; but I never received an answer. I learned to write very tolerably over there, by the assistance of the good people I spoke of. As for reading, I could do that very well before I went. My poor mother taught me to read, out of a book that she was very fond of — a strange book it was, I remember. Poor dear! what I would give only to know that she is alive.’

‘Life is very uncertain,’ said I.

‘That is true,’ said the man, with a sigh.

‘We are here one moment, and gone the next,’ I continued. ‘As I passed through the streets of a neighbouring town, I saw a respectable woman drop down, and the people said she was dead. Who knows but that she too had a son coming to see her from a distance, at that very time.’

‘Who knows, indeed,’ said the man. ‘Ah, I am afraid my mother is dead! Well, God’s will be done.’

‘However,’ said I, ‘I should not wonder at your finding your mother alive.’

‘You wouldn’t?’ said the man, looking at me wistfully.

‘I should not wonder at all,’ said I; ‘indeed something within me seems to tell me you will; I should not much mind betting five shillings to five pence

that you will see your mother within a week. Now, friend, five shillings to five pence ——’

‘Is very considerable odds,’ said the man, rubbing his hands; ‘sure you must have good reason to hope, when you are willing to give such odds.’

‘After all,’ said I, ‘it not unfrequently happens that those who lay the long odds lose. Let us hope, however. What do you mean to do in the event of finding your mother alive?’

‘I scarcely know,’ said the man; ‘I have frequently thought that if I found my mother alive, I would attempt to persuade her to accompany me to the country which I have left — it is a better country for a man — that is, a free man — to live in than this; however, let me first find my mother — if I could only find my mother ——’

‘Farewell,’ said I, rising. ‘Go your way, and God go with you — I will go mine.’ ‘I have but one thing to ask you,’ said the man. ‘What is that?’ I inquired. ‘That you would drink with me before we part — you have done me so much good.’ ‘How should we drink?’ said I; ‘we are on the top of a hill where there is nothing to drink.’ ‘But there is a village below,’ said the man; ‘do let us drink before we part.’ ‘I have been through that village already,’ said I, ‘and I do not like turning back.’ ‘Ah,’ said the man sorrowfully, ‘you will not drink with me because I told you I was ——’

‘You are quite mistaken,’ said I; ‘I would as soon

drink with a convict as with a judge. I am by no means certain that, under the same circumstances, the judge would be one whit better than the convict. Come along! I will go back to oblige you. I have an odd sixpence in my pocket, which I will change, that I may drink with you.' So we went down the hill together to the village through which I had already passed, where, finding a public-house, we drank together in true English fashion, after which we parted, the sailor-looking man going his way and I mine.

After walking about a dozen miles, I came to a town, where I rested for the night. The next morning I set out again in the direction of the north-west. I continued journeying for four days, my daily journeyings varying from twenty to twenty-five miles. During this time nothing occurred to me worthy of any special notice. The weather was brilliant, and I rapidly improved both in strength and spirits. On the fifth day, about two o'clock, I arrived at a small town. Feeling hungry, I entered a decent-looking inn — within a kind of bar I saw a huge, fat, landlord-looking person, with a very pretty, smartly-dressed maiden. Addressing myself to the fat man, 'House!' said I, 'house! Can I have dinner, house?'

'Young gentleman,' said the huge, fat landlord, 'you are come at the right time; dinner will be taken up in a few minutes, and such a dinner,' he

continued, rubbing his hands, 'as you will not see every day in these times.'

'I am hot and dusty,' said I, 'and should wish to cool my hands and face.'

'Jenny!' said the huge landlord, with the utmost gravity; 'show the gentleman into number seven that he may wash his hands and face.'

'By no means,' said I, 'I am a person of primitive habits, and there is nothing like the pump in weather like this.'

'Jenny!' said the landlord, with the same gravity as before; 'go with the young gentleman to the pump in the back kitchen, and take a clean towel along with you.'

Thereupon the rosy-faced, clean-looking damsel went to a drawer, and producing a large, thick, but snowy-white towel, she nodded to me to follow her; whereupon I followed Jenny through a long passage into the back kitchen.

And at the end of the back kitchen there stood a pump; and going to it I placed my hands beneath the spout, and said, 'Pump, Jenny'; and Jenny incontinently, without laying down the towel, pumped with one hand, and I washed and cooled my heated hands.

And, when my hands were washed and cooled, I took off my neckcloth, and unbuttoning my shirt collar, I placed my head beneath the spout of the pump, and I said unto Jenny, 'Now, Jenny, lay down the towel, and pump for your life.'

Thereupon Jenny, placing the towel on a linen-horse, took the handle of the pump with both hands and pumped over my head as handmaid had never pumped before; so that the water poured in torrents from my head, my face, and my hair, down upon the brick floor.

And after the lapse of somewhat more than a minute, I called out with a half-strangled voice, 'Hold, Jenny!' and Jenny desisted. I stood for a few moments to recover my breath, then taking the towel which Jenny proffered, I dried composedly my hands and head, my face and hair; then, returning the towel to Jenny, I gave a deep sigh and said, 'Surely this is one of the pleasant moments of life.'

Then, having set my dress to rights, and combed my hair with a pocket comb, I followed Jenny, who conducted me back through the long passage, and showed me into a neat sanded parlour on the ground floor.

I sat down by a window which looked out upon the dusty street; presently in came the handmaid, and commenced laying the table-cloth. 'Shall I spread the table for one, sir,' said she, 'or do you expect anybody to dine with you?'

'I can't say that I expect anybody,' said I, laughing inwardly to myself; 'however, if you please you can lay for two, so that if any acquaintance of mine should chance to step in, he may find a knife and fork ready for him.'

CHAPTER XVIII

I PASSED that night in the little village, and the next morning I continued my journey, directing my steps now towards the north. The weather, though beautiful, was much cooler than it had been for some time past. I walked at a great rate, with a springing and elastic step. In about two hours I came to where a kind of cottage stood a little way back from the road, with a huge oak tree before it, under the shade of which stood a little pony and cart, which seemed to contain various articles. I was going past, when I saw scrawled over the door of the cottage, 'Good beer sold here'; upon which, feeling myself all of a sudden very thirsty, I determined to go in and taste the beverage.

I entered a well-sanded kitchen, and seated myself on a bench, on one side of a long white table; the other side, which was nearest the wall, was occupied by a party, or rather family, consisting of a grimy-looking man, somewhat under the middle size, dressed in faded velveteens, and wearing a leather apron — a rather pretty-looking woman, but sunburnt, and meanly dressed, and two ragged children, a boy and girl, about four or five years old. The man sat with his eyes fixed upon the table, supporting his chin with both his hands; the woman, who was next to him, sat quite still, save that oc-

asionally she turned a glance upon her husband with eyes that appeared to have been lately crying. The children had none of the vivacity so general at their age. A more disconsolate family I had never seen; a mug, which, when filled, might contain half a pint, stood empty before them — a very disconsolate party indeed.

‘House!’ said I; ‘house!’ and then as nobody appeared, I cried again as loud as I could, ‘House! do you hear me, house!’

‘What’s your pleasure, young man?’ said an elderly woman, who now made her appearance from a side apartment.

‘To taste your ale,’ said I.

‘How much?’ said the woman, stretching out her hand towards the empty mug upon the table.

‘The largest measure-full in your house,’ said I, putting back her hand gently. ‘This is not the season for half-pint mugs.’

‘As you will, young man,’ said the landlady; and presently brought in an earthen pitcher which might contain about three pints, and which foamed and frothed withal.

‘Will this pay for it?’ said I, putting down sixpence.

‘I have to return you a penny,’ said the landlady, putting her hand into her pocket.

‘I want no change,’ said I, flourishing my hand with an air.

‘As you please, young gentleman,’ said the landlady, and then making a kind of curtsy, she again retired to the side apartment.

‘Here is your health, sir,’ said I to the grimy-looking man, as I raised the pitcher to my lips.

The tinker, for such I supposed him to be, without altering his posture, raised his eyes, looked at me for a moment, gave a slight nod, and then once more fixed his eyes upon the table. I took a draught of the ale, which I found excellent. ‘Won’t you drink?’ said I, holding the pitcher to the tinker.

The man again lifted his eyes, looked at me, and then at the pitcher, and then at me again. I thought at one time that he was about to shake his head in sign of refusal, but no, he looked once more at the pitcher, and the temptation was too strong. Slowly removing his head from his arms, he took the pitcher, sighed, nodded, and drank a tolerable quantity, and then set the pitcher down before me upon the table.

‘You had better mend your draught,’ said I to the tinker; ‘it is a sad heart that never rejoices.’

‘That’s true,’ said the tinker, and again raising the pitcher to his lips, he mended his draught as I had bidden him, drinking a larger quantity than before.

‘Pass it to your wife,’ said I.

The poor woman took the pitcher from the man’s hand; before, however, raising it to her lips, she

looked at the children. True mother's heart, thought I to myself, and taking the half-pint mug, I made her fill it, and then held it to the children, causing each to take a draught. The woman wiped her eyes with the corner of her gown before she raised the pitcher and drank to my health.

In about five minutes none of the family looked half so disconsolate as before, and the tinker and I were in deep discourse.

Oh, genial and gladdening is the power of good ale, the true and proper drink of Englishmen. He is not deserving of the name of Englishman who speaketh against ale, that is, good ale, like that which has just made merry the hearts of this poor family; and yet there are beings, calling themselves Englishmen, who say that it is a sin to drink a cup of ale, and who, on coming to this passage, will be tempted to fling down the book and exclaim, 'The man is evidently a bad man, for behold, by his own confession, he is not only fond of ale himself, but he is in the habit of tempting other people with it.' Alas! alas! what a number of silly individuals there are in this world; I wonder what they would have had me do in this instance — given the afflicted family a cup of cold water? go to! They could have found water in the road, for there was a pellucid spring only a few yards distant from the house, as they were well aware — but they wanted not water; what should I have given them? meat and bread?

go to! They were not hungry; there was stifled sobbing in their bosoms, and the first mouthful of strong meat would have choked them. What should I have given them? Money! what right had I to insult them by offering them money? Advice! words, words, words; friends, there is a time for everything; there is a time for a cup of cold water; there is a time for strong meat and bread; there is a time for advice, and there is a time for ale; and I have generally found that the time for advice is after a cup of ale. I do not say many cups; the tongue then speaketh more smoothly, and the ear listeneth more benignantlly; but why do I attempt to reason with you? do I not know you for conceited creatures, with one idea — and that a foolish one; — a crotchet, for the sake of which ye would sacrifice anything, religion if required — country? There, fling down my book, I do not wish ye to walk any farther in my company, unless you cast your nonsense away, which ye will never do, for it is the breath of your nostrils; fling down my book, it was not written to support a crotchet, for know one thing, my good people, I have invariably been an enemy to humbug.

‘Well,’ said the tinker, after we had discoursed some time, ‘I little thought when I first saw you, that you were of my own trade.’

Myself. Nor am I; ât least not exactly. There is not much difference, ’tis true, between a tinker and a smith.

Tinker. You are a whitesmith, then?

Myself. Not I, I'd scorn to be anything so mean; no, friend, black's the colour; I am a brother of the horse-shoe. Success to the hammer and tongs.

Tinker. Well, I shouldn't have thought you had been a blacksmith by your hands.

Myself. I have seen them, however, as black as yours. The truth is, I have not worked for many a day.

Tinker. Where did you serve first?

Myself. In Ireland.

Tinker. That's a good way off, isn't it?

Myself. Not very far; over those mountains to the left, and the run of salt water that lies behind them, there's Ireland.

Tinker. It's a fine thing to be a scholar.

Myself. Not half so fine as to be a tinker.

Tinker. How you talk!

Myself. Nothing but the truth; what can be better than to be one's own master? Now a tinker is his own master, a scholar is not. Let us suppose the best of scholars, a schoolmaster, for example, for I suppose you will admit that no one can be higher in scholarship than a schoolmaster; do you call his a pleasant life? I don't; we should call him a school-slave rather than a schoolmaster. Only conceive him in blessed weather like this, in his close school, teaching children to write in copy-books, 'Evil communication corrupts good manners,' or 'You

cannot touch pitch without defilement,' or to spell out of Abecedariums, or to read out Jack Smith, or Sandford and Merton. Only conceive him, I say, drudging in such guise from morning till night, without any rational enjoyment but to beat the children. Would you compare such a dog's life as that with your own — the happiest under heaven — true Eden life, as the Germans would say — pitching your tent under the pleasant hedgerow, listening to the song of the feathered tribes, collecting all the leaky kettles in the neighbourhood, soldering and joining, earning your honest bread by the wholesome sweat of your brow — making ten holes — hey, what's this? what's the man crying for?

Suddenly the tinker had covered his face with his hands, and begun to sob and moan like a man in the deepest distress; the breast of his wife was heaved with emotion; even the children were agitated, the youngest began to roar.

Myself. What's the matter with you; what are you crying about?

Tinker (uncovering his face). Lord, why to hear you talk; isn't that enough to make anybody cry — even the poor babes? Yes, you said right, 'tis life in the garden of Eden — the tinker's. I see so now that I am about to give it up.

Myself. Give it up! you must not think of such a thing.

Tinker. No, I can't bear to think of it, and yet I must; what's to be done? How hard to be frightened to death, to be driven off the roads.

Myself. Who has driven you off the roads?

Tinker. Who! the Flaming Tinman.

Myself. Who is he?

Tinker. The biggest rogue in England, and the cruellest, or he wouldn't have served me as he has done — I'll tell you all about it. I was born upon the roads, and so was my father before me, and my mother too; and I worked with them as long as they lived, as a dutiful child, for I have nothing to reproach myself with on their account; and when my father died, I took up the business, and went his beat, and supported my mother for the little time she lived; and when she died I married this young woman, who was not born upon the roads, but was a small tradesman's daughter, at Glo'ster. She had a kindness for me, and notwithstanding her friends were against the match, she married the poor tinker, and came to live with him upon the roads. Well, young man, for six or seven years I was the happiest fellow breathing, living just the life you described just now — respected by everybody in this beat; when in an evil hour comes this Black Jack, this flaming tinman, into these parts, driven as they say, out of Yorkshire — for no good, you may be sure. Now, there is no beat will support two tinkers, as you doubtless know; mine was a

good one, but it would not support the flying tinker and myself, though if it would have supported twenty it would have been all the same to the flying villain, who'll brook no one but himself; so he presently finds me out, and offers to fight me for the beat. Now, being bred upon the roads, I can fight a little, that is with anything like my match, but I was not going to fight him who happens to be twice my size, and so I told him; whereupon he knocks me down, and would have done me further mischief had not some men been nigh and prevented him; so he threatened to cut my throat, and went his way. Well, I did not like such usage at all, and was woundily frightened, and tried to keep as much out of his way as possible, going anywhere but where I thought I was likely to meet him; and sure enough for several months I contrived to keep out of his way. At last somebody told me he was gone back to Yorkshire, whereupon I was glad at heart, and ventured to show myself, going here and there as I did before. Well, young man, it was yesterday that I and mine set ourselves down in a lane, about five miles from here, and lighted our fire, and had our dinner, and after dinner I sat down to mend three kettles and a frying-pan which the people in the neighbourhood had given me to mend — for, as I told you before, I have a good connection, owing to my honesty. Well, as I sat there hard at work happy as the day's long, and thinking of anything

but what was to happen, who should come up but this Black Jack, this king of the tinkers, rattling along in his cart, with his wife, that they call Gray Moll, by his side — for the villain has got a wife, and a maidservant too; the last I never saw, but they that has says that she is as big as a house, and young, and well to look at, which can't be all said of Moll, who, though she's big enough in all conscience, is neither young nor handsome. Well, no sooner does he see me and mine, than giving the reins to Gray Moll, he springs out of his cart, and comes straight at me; not a word did he say, but on he comes straight at me like a wild bull. I am a quiet man, young fellow, but I saw now that quietness would be of no use, so I sprang up upon my legs, and being bred upon the roads, and able to fight a little, I squared as he came running in upon me, and had a round or two with him. Lord bless you, young man, it was like a fly fighting with a elephant — one of those big beasts the show-folks carry about. I had not a chance with the fellow, he knocked me here, he knocked me there, knocked me into the hedge, and knocked me out again. I was at my last shifts, and my poor wife saw it. Now my poor wife, though she is as gentle as a pigeon, has yet a spirit of her own, and though she wasn't bred upon the roads, can scratch a little, so when she saw me at my last shifts, she flew at the villain — she couldn't bear to see her partner mur-

dered — and she scratched the villain's face. Lord bless you, young man, she had better have been quiet: Gray Moll no sooner saw what she was about, than springing out of the cart, where she had sat all along perfectly quiet, save a little whooping and screeching to encourage her blade: — Gray Moll, I say (my flesh creeps when I think of it — for I am a kind husband, and love my poor wife) ——

Myself. Take another draught of the ale; you look frightened, and it will do you good. Stout liquor makes stout heart, as the man says in the play.

Tinker. That's true, young man; here's to you — where was I? Gray Moll no sooner saw what my wife was about, than, springing out of the cart, she flew at my poor wife, clawed off her bonnet in a moment, and seized hold of her hair. Lord bless you, young man! my poor wife in the hands of Gray Moll was nothing better than a pigeon in the claws of a buzzard hawk or I in the hands of the Flaming Tinman, which when I saw my heart was fit to burst, and I determined to give up everything — everything to save my poor wife out of Gray Moll's claws. 'Hold!' I shouted. 'Hold, both of you — Jack, Moll. Hold, both of you, for God's sake, and I'll do what you will — give up trade, and business, connection, bread, and everything, never more travel the roads, and go down on my knees to you in the bargain.' Well, this had some effect:

Moll let go my wife, and the Blazing Tinman stopped for a moment; it was only for a moment, however, that he left off — all of a sudden he hit me a blow which sent me against a tree; and what did the villain then? why, the flying villain seized me by the throat, and almost throttled me, roaring — what do you think, young man, that the flaming villain roared out?

Myself. I really don't know — something horrible, I suppose.

Tinker. Horrible, indeed; you may well say horrible, young man; neither more nor less than the Bible — ‘a Bible, a Bible!’ roared the Blazing Tinman; and he pressed my throat so hard against the tree that my senses began to dwaul away — ‘A Bible, a Bible!’ still ringing in my ears. Now, young man, my poor wife is a Christian woman, and though she travels the roads, carries a Bible with her at the bottom of her sack, with which sometimes she teaches the children to read — it was the only thing she brought with her from the place of her kith and kin, save her own body and the clothes on her back; so my poor wife half distracted, runs to her sack, pulls out the Bible, and puts it into the hand of the Blazing Tinman, who then thrusts the end of it into my mouth with such fury that it made my lips bleed, and broke short one of my teeth, which happened to be decayed. ‘Swear,’ said he, ‘swear, you mumping villain, take your

Bible oath that you will quit and give up the beat altogether, or I'll ——' and then the hard-hearted villain made me swear by the Bible, and my own damnation, half-throttled as I was — to — to — I can't go on ——

Myself. Take another draught — stout liquor ——

Tinker. I can't, young man, my heart's too full, and what's more, the pitcher is empty.

Myself. And so he swore you, I suppose, on the Bible, to quit the roads?

Tinker. You are right, he did so, the gipsy villain.

Myself. Gipsy! Is he a gipsy?

Tinker. Not exactly; what they call a half and half. His father was a gipsy, and his mother, like mine, one who walked the roads.

Myself. Is he of the Smiths — the Petulengros?

Tinker. I say, young man, you know a thing or two; one would think, to hear you talk, you had been bred upon the roads. I thought none but those bred upon the roads knew anything of that name — Petulengros! No, not he, he fights the Petulengros whenever he meets them; he likes nobody but himself, and wants to be king of the roads. I believe he is a Boss, or a ——; at any rate, he's a bad one, as I know to my cost.

Myself. And what are you going to do?

Tinker. Do! you may well ask that; I don't know

what to do. My poor wife and I have been talking of that all the morning over that half-pint mug of beer; we can't determine on what's to be done. All we know is that we must quit the roads. The villain swore that the next time he saw us on the roads he'd cut all our throats and seize our horse and bit of a cart that are now standing out there under the tree.

Myself. And what do you mean to do with your horse and cart?

Tinker. Another question! What shall we do with our cart and pony? they are of no use to us now. Stay on the roads I will not, both for my oath's sake and my own. If we had a trifle of money we were thinking of going to Bristol, where I might get up a little business, but we have none; our last three farthings we spent about the mug of beer.

Myself. By why don't you sell your horse and cart?

Tinker. Sell them! And who would buy them unless someone who wished to set up in my line; but there's no beat, and what's the use of the horse and cart and the few tools without the beat.

Myself. I'm half inclined to buy your cart and pony and your beat too.

Tinker. You! How came you to think of such a thing?

Myself. Why, like yourself, I hardly know what to do. I want a home and work. As for a home, I

suppose I can contrive to make a home out of your tent and cart; and as for work, I must learn to be a tinker; it would not be hard for one of my trade to learn to tinker; what better can I do? Would you have me go to Chester and work there now? I don't like the thoughts of it. If I go to Chester and work there I can't be my own man; I must work under a master, and perhaps he and I should quarrel, and when I quarrel I am apt to hit folks, and those that hit folks are sometimes sent to prison. I don't like the thought of either going to Chester or to Chester prison. What do you think I could earn at Chester?

Tinker. A matter of eleven shillings a week if anybody would employ you, which I don't think they would with those hands of yours. But whether they would or not, if you are of a quarrelsome nature, you must not go to Chester; you would be in the castle in no time. I don't know how to advise you. As for selling you my stock, I'd see you farther first, for your own sake.

Myself. Why?

Tinker. Why! you would get your head knocked off. Suppose you were to meet him?

Myself. Pooh! don't be afraid on my account; if I were to meet him I could easily manage him one way or other. I know all kinds of strange words and names, and, as I told you before, I sometimes hit people when they put me out.

Here the tinker's wife, who for some minutes past had been listening attentively to our discourse, interposed, saying, in a low, soft tone: 'I really don't see, John, why you shouldn't sell the young man the things, seeing that he wishes for them, and is so confident; you have told him plainly how matters stand, and if anything ill should befall him people couldn't lay the blame on you; but I don't think any ill will befall him, and who knows but God has sent him to our assistance in time of need.'

'I'll hear of no such thing,' said the tinker; 'I have drunk at the young man's expense, and though he says he's quarrelsome I would not wish to sit in pleasanter company. A pretty fellow I should be now if I were to let him follow his own will. If he once sets up on my beat he's a lost man, his ribs will be stove in and his head knocked off his shoulders. There, you are crying, but you sha'n't have your will, though; I won't be the young man's destruction — if, indeed, I thought he could manage the tinker — but he never can; he says he can hit, but it's no use hitting the tinker. Crying still! you are enough to drive one mad. I say, young man, I believe you understand a thing or two. Just now you were talking of knowing hard words and names — I don't wish to send you to your mischief — you say you know hard words and names; let us see. Only on one condition I'll sell you the pony and things; as for the beat, it's gone, isn't

mine — sworn away by my own mouth. Tell me what's my name; if you can't, may I ——'

Myself. Don't swear, it's a bad habit, neither pleasant nor profitable. Your name is Slingsby — Jack Slingsby. There, don't stare, there's nothing in my telling you your name: I've been in these parts before, at least not very far from here. Ten years ago, when I was little more than a child, I was about twenty miles from here in a post chaise, at the door of an inn, and as I looked from the window of the chaise, I saw you standing by a gutter with a big tin ladle in your hand, and somebody called you Jack Slingsby. I never forget anything I hear or see; I can't, I wish I could. So there's nothing strange in my knowing your name; indeed, there's nothing strange in anything, provided you examine it to the bottom. Now what am I to give you for the things?

I paid Slingsby five pounds ten shillings for his stock in trade, cart, and pony — purchased sundry provisions of the landlady, also a waggoner's frock, which had belonged to a certain son of hers, deceased, gave my little animal a feed of corn, and prepared to depart.

'God bless you, young man,' said Slingsby, shaking me by the hand, 'you are the best friend I've had for many a day: I have but one thing to tell you — Don't cross that fellow's path if you can help it; and stay — should the pony refuse to go, just touch him so, and he'll fly like the wind.'

CHAPTER XIX

It was two or three hours past noon when I took my departure from the place of the last adventure, walking by the side of my little cart; the pony, invigorated by the corn, to which he was probably not much accustomed, proceeded right gallantly; so far from having to hasten him forward by the particular application which the tinker had pointed out to me, I had rather to repress his eagerness, being, though an excellent pedestrian, not unfrequently left behind. The country through which I passed was beautiful and interesting, but solitary: few habitations appeared. As it was quite a matter of indifference to me in what direction I went, the whole world being before me, I allowed the pony to decide upon the matter; it was not long before he left the high road, being probably no friend to public places. I followed him I knew not whither, but, from subsequent observation, have reason to suppose that our course was in a north-west direction. At length night came upon us, and a cold wind sprang up, which was succeeded by a drizzling rain.

I had originally intended to pass the night in the cart, or to pitch my little tent on some convenient spot by the road's side; but, owing to the alteration in the weather, I thought that it would be advisable

to take up my quarters in any hedge alehouse at which I might arrive. To tell the truth, I was not very sorry to have an excuse to pass the night once more beneath a roof. I had determined to live quite independent, but I had never before passed a night by myself abroad, and felt a little apprehensive at the idea; I hoped, however, on the morrow, to be a little more prepared for the step, so I determined for one night — only for one night longer — to sleep like a Christian; but human determinations are not always put into effect, such a thing as opportunity is frequently wanting, such was the case here. I went on for a considerable time, in expectation of coming to some rustic hostelry, but nothing of the kind presented itself to my eyes; the country in which I now was seemed almost uninhabited, not a house of any kind was to be seen — at least I saw none — though it is true houses might be near without my seeing them, owing to the darkness of the night, for neither moon nor star was abroad. I heard, occasionally, the bark of dogs; but the sound appeared to come from an immense distance. The rain still fell, and the ground beneath my feet was wet and miry; in short, it was a night in which even a tramper by profession would feel more comfortable in being housed than abroad.

I now bethought me that, as I had a carriage of my own, I might as well make use of it; I therefore got into the cart, and, taking the reins in my hand,

gave an encouraging cry to the pony, whereupon the sturdy little animal started again at as brisk a pace as if he had not already come many a long mile. I lay half reclining in the cart, holding the reins lazily, and allowing the animal to go just where he pleased, often wondering where he would conduct me. At length I felt drowsy, and my head sank upon my breast; I soon aroused myself, but it was only to doze again; this occurred several times. Opening my eyes after a doze somewhat longer than the others, I found that the drizzling rain had ceased, a corner of the moon was apparent in the heavens, casting a faint light; I looked around for a moment or two, but my eyes and brain were heavy with slumber, and I could scarcely distinguish where we were. I had a kind of dim consciousness that we were traversing an uninclosed country — perhaps a heath; I thought, however, that I saw certain large black objects looming in the distance, which I had a confused idea might be woods or plantations; the pony still moved at his usual pace. I did not find the jolting of the cart at all disagreeable; on the contrary, it had quite a somniferous effect upon me. Again my eyes closed; I opened them once more, but with less perception in them than before, looked forward, and, muttering something about woodlands, I placed myself in an easier posture than I had hitherto done, and fairly fell asleep.

How long I continued in that state I am unable to

say, but I believe for a considerable time; I was suddenly awakened by the ceasing of the jolting to which I had become accustomed, and of which I was perfectly sensible in my sleep. I started up and looked around me, the moon was still shining, and the face of the heaven was studded with stars; I found myself amidst a maze of bushes of various kinds, but principally hazel and holly, through which was a path or driftway with grass growing on either side, upon which the pony was already diligently browsing. I conjectured that this place had been one of the haunts of his former master, and, on dismounting and looking about, was strengthened in that opinion by finding a spot under an ash tree which, from its burnt and blackened appearance, seemed to have been frequently used as a fireplace. I will take up my quarters here thought I; it is an excellent spot for me to commence my new profession in; I was quite right to trust myself to the guidance of the pony. Unharnessing the animal without delay, I permitted him to browse at free will on the grass, convinced that he would not wander far from a place to which he was so much attached; I then pitched the little tent close beside the ash tree to which I have alluded, and conveyed two or three articles into it, and instantly felt that I had commenced housekeeping for the first time in my life. Housekeeping, however, without a fire is a very sorry affair, something like the housekeeping

of children in their toy houses; of this I was the more sensible from feeling very cold and shivering, owing to my late exposure to the rain, and sleeping in the night air. Collecting, therefore, all the dry sticks and furze I could find, I placed them upon the fireplace, adding certain chips and a billet which I found in the cart, it having apparently been the habit of Slingsby to carry with him a small store of fuel. Having then struck a spark in a tinder-box and lighted a match, I set fire to the combustible heap, and was not slow in raising a cheerful blaze; I then drew my cart near the fire, and, seating myself on one of the shafts, hung over the warmth with feelings of intense pleasure and satisfaction. Having continued in this posture for a considerable time, I turned my eyes to the heaven in the direction of a particular star; I, however, could not find the star, nor indeed many of the starry train, the greater number having fled, from which circumstance, and from the appearance of the sky, I concluded that morning was nigh. About this time I again began to feel drowsy; I therefore arose, and having prepared for myself a kind of couch in the tent, I flung myself upon it and went to sleep.

I will not say that I was awakened in the morning by the carolling of birds, as I perhaps might if I were writing a novel; I awoke because, to use vulgar language, I had slept my sleep out, not because the

birds were carolling around me in numbers, as they had probably been for hours without my hearing them. I got up and left my tent; the morning was yet more bright than that of the preceding day. Impelled by curiosity, I walked about, endeavouring to ascertain to what place chance, or rather the pony, had brought me; following the driftway for some time, amidst bushes and stunted trees, I came to a grove of dark pines, through which it appeared to lead; I tracked it a few hundred yards, but seeing nothing but trees, and the way being wet and sloughy, owing to the recent rain, I returned on my steps, and, pursuing the path in another direction, came to a sandy road leading over a common, doubtless the one I had traversed the preceding night. My curiosity satisfied, I returned to my little encampment, and on the way beheld a small footpath on the left winding through the bushes, which had before escaped my observation. Having reached my tent and cart, I breakfasted on some of the provisions which I had procured the day before, and then proceeded to take a regular account of the stock formerly possessed by Slingsby the tinker, but now become my own by right of lawful purchase.

Besides the pony, the cart, and the tent, I found I was possessed of a mattress stuffed with straw on which to lie, and a blanket to cover me, the last quite clean and nearly new; then there was a frying-pan and a kettle, the first for cooking any food which

required cooking, and the second for heating any water which I might wish to heat. I likewise found an earthen teapot and two or three cups; of the first I should rather say I found the remains, it being broken in three parts, no doubt since it came into my possession, which would have precluded the possibility of my asking anybody to tea for the present, should anybody visit me, even supposing I had tea and sugar, which was not the case. I then overhauled what might more strictly be called the stock-in-trade; this consisted of various tools, an iron ladle, a chafing pan and small bellows, sundry pans and kettles, the latter being of tin, with the exception of one which was of copper, all in a state of considerable dilapidation — if I may use the term; of these first Slingsby had spoken in particular, advising me to mend them as soon as possible, and to endeavour to sell them, in order that I might have the satisfaction of receiving some return upon the outlay which I had made. There was likewise a small quantity of block tin, sheet tin, and solder. ‘This Slingsby,’ said I, ‘is certainly a very honest man, he has sold me more than my money’s worth; I believe, however, there is something more in the cart.’ Thereupon I rummaged the farther end of the cart, and, amidst a quantity of straw, I found a small anvil and bellows of that kind which are used in forges, and two hammers such as smiths use, one great, and the other small.

The sight of these last articles caused me no little surprise, as no word which had escaped from the mouth of Slingsby had given me reason to suppose that he had ever followed the occupation of a smith; yet, if he had not, how did he come by them? I sat down upon the shaft, and pondered the question deliberately in my mind; at length I concluded that he had come by them by one of those numerous casualties which occur upon the roads, of which I, being a young hand upon the roads, must have a very imperfect conception; honestly, of course — for I scouted the idea that Slingsby would have stolen this blacksmith's gear — for I had the highest opinion of his honesty, which opinion I still retain at the present day, which is upwards of twenty years from the time of which I am speaking, during the whole of which period I have neither seen the poor fellow, nor received any intelligence of him.

CHAPTER XX

I PASSED the greater part of the day in endeavouring to teach myself the mysteries of my new profession. I cannot say that I was very successful, but the time passed agreeably, and was therefore not ill spent. Towards evening I flung my work aside, took some refreshment, and afterwards a walk.

This time I turned up the small footpath, of which I have already spoken. It led in a zigzag manner through thickets of hazel, elder, and sweet-briar; after following its windings for somewhat better than a furlong, I heard a gentle sound of water, and presently came to a small rill which ran directly across the path. I was rejoiced at the sight, for I had already experienced the want of water, which I yet knew must be nigh at hand, as I was in a place to all appearance occasionally frequented by wandering people who, I was aware, never take up their quarters in places where water is difficult to be obtained. Forthwith I stretched myself on the ground, and took a long and delicious draught of the crystal stream, and then, seating myself in a bush, I continued for some time gazing on the water as it purled tinkling away in its channel through an opening in the hazels, and should have probably continued much longer had not the thought that I

had left my property unprotected compelled me to rise and return to my encampment.

Night came on, and a beautiful night it was; up rose the moon, and innumerable stars decked the firmament of heaven. I sat on the shaft, my eyes turned upwards. I had found it: there it was twinkling millions of miles above me, mightiest star of the system to which we belong: of all stars, the one which has the most interest for me — the star Jupiter.

Why have I always taken an interest in thee, O Jupiter? I know nothing about thee, save what every child knows, that thou art a big star whose only light is derived from moons. And is not that knowledge enough to make me feel an interest in thee? Ay, truly, I never look at thee without wondering what is going on in thee, what is life in Jupiter? That there is life in Jupiter who can doubt? There is life in our own little star, therefore there must be life in Jupiter, which is not a little star. But how different must life be in Jupiter from what it is in our own little star! Life here is life beneath the dear sun — life in Jupiter is life beneath moons — four moons — no single moon is able to illumine that vast bulk. All know what life is in our own little star; it is anything but a routine of happiness here where the dear sun rises to us every day; then how sad and moping must life be in mighty Jupiter, on which no sun ever shines, and which is never

lighted save by pale moon-beams! The thought that there is more sadness and melancholy in Jupiter than in this world of ours, where, alas! there is but too much, has always made me take a melancholy interest in that huge, distant star.

Two or three days passed by in much the same manner as the first. During the morning I worked upon my kettles, and employed the remaining part of the day as I best could. The whole of this time I only saw two individuals, rustics, who passed by my encampment without vouchsafing me a glance; they probably considered themselves my superiors, as perhaps they were.

One very brilliant morning, as I sat at work in very good spirits, for by this time I had actually mended, in a very creditable way as I imagined, two kettles and a frying-pan, I heard a voice which seemed to proceed from the path leading to the rivulet; at first it sounded from a considerable distance, but drew nearer by degrees. I soon remarked that the tones were exceedingly sharp and shrill, with yet something of childhood in them. Once or twice I distinguished certain words in the song which the voice was singing; the words were — but no, I thought again I was probably mistaken — and then the voice ceased for a time; presently I heard it again, close to the entrance of the footpath; in another moment I heard it in the lane or glade in which stood my tent, where it abruptly stopped,

but not before I had heard the very words which I at first thought I had distinguished.

I turned my head; at the entrance of the foot-path, which might be about thirty yards from the place where I was sitting, I perceived the figure of a young girl; her face was turned towards me, and she appeared to be scanning me and my encampment; after a little time she looked in the other direction, only for a moment, however; probably observing nothing in that quarter, she again looked towards me, and almost immediately stepped forward, and, as she advanced, sang the song which I had heard in the wood, the first words of which were those which I have already alluded to.

‘The Romany chi
And the Romany chal,
Shall jaw tasaulor
To drab the bawlor,
And dook the gry
Of the farming rye.’

A very pretty song, thought I, falling again hard to work upon my kettle; a very pretty song, which bodes the farmers much good. Let them look to their cattle.

‘All alone here, brother,’ said a voice close by me, in sharp but not disagreeable tones.

I made no answer but continued my work, click, click, with the gravity which became one of my profession. I allowed at least half a minute to elapse before I even lifted up my eyes.

A girl of about thirteen was standing before me; her features were very pretty, but with a peculiar expression; her complexion was a clear olive, and her jet-black hair hung back upon her shoulders. She was rather scantily dressed, and her arms and feet were bare; round her neck, however, was a handsome string of corals with ornaments of gold; in her hand she held a bulrush.

‘All alone here, brother,’ said the girl, as I looked up; ‘all alone here, in the lane; where are your wife and children?’

‘Why do you call me brother?’ said I; ‘I am no brother of yours. Do you take me for one of your people? I am no gipsy; not I, indeed!’

‘Don’t be afraid, brother, you are no Roman — Roman indeed, you are not handsome enough to be a Roman, not black enough, tinker though you be. If I called you brother, it was because I didn’t know what else to call you. Marry, come up, brother, I should be very sorry to have you for a brother.’

‘Then you don’t like me?’

‘Neither like you, nor dislike you, brother; what will you have for that kekaubi?’

‘What’s the use of talking to me in that un-Christian way; what do you mean, young gentlewoman?’

‘Lord, brother, what a fool you are; every tinker knows what a kekaubi is. I was asking you what you would have for that kettle.’

‘Three-and-sixpence, young gentlewoman, isn’t it well mended?’

‘Well mended! I could have done it better myself; three-and-sixpence! it’s only fit to be played at football with.’

‘I will take no less for it, young gentlewoman, it has caused me a world of trouble.’

‘I never saw a worse mended kettle. I say, brother, your hair is white.’

‘’Tis nature; your hair is black; nature, nothing but nature.’

‘I am young, brother; my hair is black — that’s nature; you are young, brother; your hair is white — that’s not nature.’

‘I can’t help it if it be not, but it is nature after all; did you never see grey hair on the young?’

‘Never! I have heard it is true of a grey lad, and a bad one he was. Oh, so bad.’

‘Sit down on the grass and tell me all about it, sister; do, to oblige me, pretty sister.’

‘Hey, brother, you don’t speak as you did — you don’t speak like a Gorgio, you speak like one of us, you call me sister.’

‘As you call me brother; I am not an uncivil person after all, sister.’

‘I say, brother, tell me one thing, and look me in the face — there — do you speak Romany?’

‘Romany! Romany! what is Romany?’

‘What is Romany? our language, to be sure; tell

me, brother, only one thing, you don't speak Romany?'

'You say it.'

'I don't say it, I wish to know. Do you speak Romany?'

'Do you mean thieves' slang — cant? no, I don't speak cant, I don't like it, I only know a few words; they call a sixpence a tanner, don't they?'

'I don't know,' said the girl, sitting down on the ground, 'I was almost thinking — well, never mind, you don't know Romany. I say, brother, I think I should like to have the kekaubi.'

'I thought you said it was badly mended?'

'Yes, yes, brother, but ——'

'I thought you said it was only fit to be played at football with?'

'Yes, yes, brother, but ——'

'What will you give for it?'

'Brother, I am the poor person's child, I will give you sixpence for the kekaubi.'

'Poor person's child; how came you by that necklace?'

'Be civil, brother; am I to have the kekaubi?'

'Not for sixpence; isn't the kettle nicely mended?'

'I never saw a nicer mended kettle, brother; am I to have the kekaubi, brother?'

'You like me then?'

'I don't dislike you — I dislike no one; there's only one, and him I don't dislike, him I hate.'

‘Who is he?’

‘I scarcely know, I never saw him, but ’tis no affair of yours, you don’t speak Romany; you will let me have the kekaubi, pretty brother?’

‘You may have it, but not for sixpence, I’ll give it to you.’

‘Parraco tute, that is, I thank you, brother; the rikkeni kekaubi is now mine. O, rare! I thank you kindly, brother.’

Starting up, she flung the bulrush aside which she had hitherto held in her hand, and seizing the kettle she looked at it for a moment, and then began a kind of dance, flourishing the kettle over her head the while, and singing —

‘The Romany chi
And the Romany chal,
Shall jaw tasaulor
To draw the bawlor,
And dook the gry
Of the farming rye.’

‘Good-bye, brother, I must be going.’

‘Good-bye, sister; why do you sing that wicked song?’

‘Wicked song, hey, brother! you don’t understand the song!’

‘Ha, ha! gipsy daughter,’ said I, starting up and clapping my hands, ‘I don’t understand Romany, don’t I? You shall see; here’s the answer to your gillie —

“The Romany chi
And the Romany chal



BEGAN A KIND OF DANCE, FLOURISHING THE KETTLE OVER HER
HEAD THE WHILE

Love Luripen
And dukkeripen,
And hokkeripen,
And every pen
But Lachipen
And tatchipen.”

The girl, who had given a slight start when I began, remained for some time after I had concluded the song, standing motionless as a statue with the kettle in her hand. At length she came towards me and stared me full in the face. ‘Grey, tall, and talks Romany,’ said she to herself. In her countenance there was an expression which I had not seen before — an expression which struck me as being composed of fear, curiosity, and the deepest hate. It was momentary, however, and was succeeded by one smiling, frank, and open. ‘Ha, ha, brother,’ said she, ‘well, I like you all the better for talking Romany; it is a sweet language, isn’t it? especially as you sing it. How did you pick it up? But you picked it up upon the roads, no doubt! Ha, it was funny in you to pretend not to know it, and you so flush with it all the time; it was not kind in you, however, to frighten the poor person’s child so by screaming out, but it was kind in you to give the rikkeni kekaubi to the child of the poor person. She will be grateful to you; she will bring you her little dog to show you, her pretty juggal; the poor person’s child will come and see you again; you are not going away to-day, I hope, or to-morrow, pretty

brother, grey-haired brother — you are not going away to-morrow, I hope?’

‘Nor the next day,’ said I; ‘only to take a stroll to see if I can sell a kettle; good-bye, little sister, Romany sister, dingy sister.’

‘Good-bye, tall brother,’ said the girl, as she departed singing —

‘The Romany chi,’ etc.

‘There’s something about that girl that I don’t understand,’ said I to myself; ‘something mysterious. However, it is nothing to me, she knows not who I am, and if she did, what then?’

Late that evening, as I sat on the shaft of my cart in deep meditation, with my arms folded, I thought I heard a rustling in the bushes over against me. I turned my eyes in that direction, but saw nothing. ‘Some bird,’ said I, ‘an owl, perhaps’; and once more I fell into meditation; my mind wandered from one thing to another — musing now on the structure of the Roman tongue — now on the rise and fall of the Persian power — and now on the powers vested in recorders at quarter sessions. I was thinking what a fine thing it must be to be a recorder of the peace, when, lifting up my eyes, I saw right opposite, not a culprit at the bar, but, staring at me through a gap in the bush, a face wild and strange, half covered with grey hair; I only saw it a moment, the next it had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXI

THE next day, at an early hour, I harnessed my little pony, and, putting my things in my cart, I went on my projected stroll. Crossing the moor, I arrived in about an hour at a small village, from which, after a short stay, I proceeded to another, and from thence to a third. I found that the name of Slingsby was well known in these parts.

‘If you are a friend of Slingsby you must be an honest lad,’ said an ancient crone; ‘you shall never want for work whilst I can give it you. Here, take my kettle, the bottom came out this morning, and lend me that of yours till you bring it back. I’m not afraid to trust you — not I. Don’t hurry yourself, young man; if you don’t come back for a fortnight, I sha’n’t have the worse opinion of you.’

I returned to my quarters at evening, tired but rejoiced at heart. I had work before me for several days, having collected various kekaubies which required mending, in place of those which I had left behind — those which I had been employed upon during the last few days. I found all quiet in the lane or glade, and, unharnessing my little horse, I once more pitched my tent in the old spot beneath the ash, lighted my fire, ate my frugal meal, and then, after looking for some time at the heavenly

bodies, and more particularly at the star Jupiter, I entered my tent, lay down upon my pallet, and went to sleep.

Nothing occurred on the following day which requires any particular notice, nor indeed on the one succeeding that. It was about noon on the third day that I sat beneath the shade of the ash tree. I was not at work, for the weather was particularly hot, and I felt but little inclination to make any exertion. Leaning my back against the tree, I was not long in falling into a slumber; I particularly remember that slumber of mine beneath the ash tree, for it was about the sweetest that I ever enjoyed. How long I continued in it I do not know; I could almost have wished that it had lasted to the present time. All of a sudden it appeared to me that a voice cried in my ear, 'Danger! danger! danger!' Nothing seemingly could be more distinct than the words which I heard. Then an uneasy sensation came over me, which I strove to get rid of, and at last succeeded, for I awoke. The gipsy girl was standing just opposite to me, with her eyes fixed upon my countenance. A singular kind of little dog stood beside her.

'Ha!' said I, 'was it you that cried danger? What danger is there?'

'Danger, brother, there is no danger; what danger should there be? I called to my little dog, but that was in the wood. My little dog's name is not

Danger, but Stranger. What danger should there be, brother?’

‘What, indeed, except in sleeping beneath a tree. What is that you have got in your hand?’

‘Something for you,’ said the girl, sitting down and proceeding to untie a white napkin — ‘a pretty manricli, so sweet, so nice. When I went home to my people I told my grandbebee how kind you had been to the poor person’s child, and when my grandbebee saw the kekaubi, she said, “Hir mi devlis, it won’t do for the poor people to be ungrateful. By my God, I will bake a cake for the young harko mescro.”’

‘But there are two cakes.’

‘Yes, brother, two cakes, both for you; my grandbebee meant them both for you — but list, brother, I will have one of them for bringing them. I know you will give me one, pretty brother, grey-haired brother. Which shall I have, brother?’

In the napkin were two round cakes, seemingly made of rich and costly compounds, and precisely similar in form, each weighing about half a pound.

‘Which shall I have, brother?’ said the gipsy girl.

‘Whichever you please.’

‘No, brother, no; the cakes are yours, not mine; it is for you to say.’

‘Well, then, give me the one nearest you, and take the other.’

‘Yes, brother, yes,’ said the girl; and taking the cakes, she flung them into the air two or three times catching them as they fell, and singing the while.

‘Pretty brother, grey-haired brother — here, brother,’ said she, ‘here is your cake; this other is mine.’

‘Are you sure,’ said I, taking the cake, ‘that this is the one I chose?’

‘Quite sure, brother; but if you like you can have mine. There’s no difference, however. Shall I eat?’

‘Yes, sister, eat.’

‘See, brother, I do. Now, brother, eat, pretty brother, grey-haired brother.’

‘I am not hungry.’

‘Not hungry! Well, what then — what has being hungry to do with the matter? It is my grandbe-bee’s cake which was sent because you were kind to the poor person’s child. Eat, brother, eat, and we shall be like the children in the wood that the Gorgios speak of.’

‘The children in the wood had nothing to eat.’

‘Yes, they had hips and haws; we have better. Eat, brother.’

‘See, sister, I do’; and I ate a piece of the cake.

‘Well, brother, how do you like it?’ said the girl, looking fixedly at me.

‘It is very rich and sweet, and yet there is something strange about it. I don’t think I shall eat any more.’

‘Fie, brother, fie, to find fault with the poor person’s cake; see, I have nearly eaten mine.’

‘That’s a pretty little dog.’

‘Is it not, brother? that’s my juggal, my little sister, as I call her.’

‘Come here, juggal,’ said I to the animal.

‘What do you want with my juggal?’ said the girl.

‘Only to give her a piece of cake,’ said I, offering the dog a piece which I had just broken off.

‘What do you mean?’ said the girl, snatching the dog away. ‘My grandbebee’s cake is not for dogs.’

‘Why, I just now saw you give the animal a piece of yours.’

‘You lie, brother, you saw no such thing. But I see how it is, you wish to affront the poor person’s child. I shall go to my house.’

‘Keep still, and don’t be angry. See, I have eaten the piece which I offered the dog. I meant no offence. It is a sweet cake after all.’

‘Isn’t it, brother? I am glad you like it. Offence! brother, no offence at all. I am so glad you like my grandbebee’s cake, but she will be wanting me at home. Eat one piece more of grandbebee’s cake, and I will go.’

‘I am not hungry, I will put the rest by.’

‘One piece more before I go, handsome brother, grey-haired brother.’

‘I will not eat any more; I have already eaten

more than I wished, to oblige you. If you must go, good-day to you.'

The girl rose upon her feet, looked hard at me, then at the remainder of the cake which I held in my hand, and then at me again, and then stood for a moment or two, as if in deep thought. Presently an air of satisfaction came over her countenance, she smiled and said, 'Well' brother, well, do as you please; I merely wished you to eat because you have been so kind to the poor person's child. She loves you so, that she could have wished to have seen you eat it all. Good-bye, brother. I daresay when I am gone you will eat more of it; and if you don't, I daresay you have eaten enough to — to — show your love for us. After all it was a poor person's cake, a Romany manricli, and all you Gorgios are somewhat gorgious. Farewell, brother, pretty brother, grey-haired brother. Come, juggal.'

I remained under the ash tree seated on the grass for a minute or two, and endeavoured to resume the occupation in which I had been engaged before I fell asleep, but I felt no inclination for labour. I then thought I would sleep again, and once more reclined against the tree, and slumbered for some little time, but my sleep was more agitated than before. Something appeared to bear heavy on my breast, I struggled in my sleep, fell on the grass, and awoke; my temples were throbbing, there was a burning in my eyes, and my mouth felt parched: the oppression

about the chest which I had felt in my sleep still continued. 'I must shake off these feelings,' said I, 'and get upon my legs.' I walked rapidly up and down upon the green sward; at length, feeling my thirst increase, I directed my steps down the narrow path to the spring which ran amidst the bushes; arriving there, I knelt down and drank of the water, but on lifting up my head I felt thirstier than before; again I drank, but with the like results; I was about to drink for the third time, when I felt a dreadful qualm which instantly robbed me of nearly all my strength. What can be the matter with me? thought I; but I suppose I have made myself ill by drinking cold water. I got up and made the best of my way back to my tent. Before I reached it the qualm had seized me again, and I was deadly sick. I flung myself on my pallet; qualm succeeded qualm, but in the intervals my mouth was dry and burning, and I felt a frantic desire to drink, but no water was at hand, and to reach the spring once more was impossible: the qualms continued, deadly pains shot through my whole frame; I could bear my agonies no longer, and I fell into a trance or swoon. How long I continued therein I know not; on recovering, however, I felt somewhat better, and attempted to lift my head off my couch; the next moment, however, the qualms and pains returned, if possible, with greater violence than before. I am dying, thought I, like a dog, without any

help; and then methought I heard a sound at a distance like people singing, and then once more I relapsed into my swoon.

I revived just as a heavy blow sounded upon the canvas of the tent. I started, but my condition did not permit me to rise; again the same kind of blow sounded upon the canvas; I thought for a moment of crying out and requesting assistance, but an inexplicable something chained my tongue, and now I heard a whisper on the outside of the tent. 'He does not move, bebee,' said a voice which I knew. 'I should not wonder if it has done for him already; however, strike again with your ran'; and then there was another blow, after which another voice cried aloud in a strange tone, 'Is the gentleman of the house asleep, or is he taking his dinner?' I remained quite silent and motionless, and in another moment the voice continued, 'What, no answer? what can the gentleman of the house be about that he makes no answer? perhaps the gentleman of the house may be darning his stockings?' Thereupon a face peered into the door of the tent, at the farther extremity of which I was stretched. It was that of a woman, but owing to the posture in which she stood, with her back to the light, and partly owing to a large straw bonnet, I could distinguish but very little of the features of her countenance. I had, however, recognised her voice; it was that of my old acquaintance, Mrs. Herne. 'Ho, ho, sir!' said

she, 'here you are. Come here, Leonora,' said she to the gipsy girl, who pressed in at the other side of the door; 'Here is the gentleman, not asleep, but only stretched out after dinner. Sit down on your ham, child, at the door; I shall do the same. There — you have seen me before, sir, have you not?'

'The gentleman makes no answer, bebee; perhaps he does not know you.'

'I have known him of old, Leonora,' said Mrs. Herne; 'and, to tell you the truth, though I spoke to him just now, I expected no answer.'

'It's a way he has, bebee, I suppose?'

'Yes, child, it's a way he has.'

'Take off your bonnet, bebee; perhaps he cannot see your face.'

'I do not think that will be of much use, child; however, I will take off my bonnet — there — and shake out my hair — there — you have seen this hair before, sir, and this face ——'

'No answer, bebee.'

'Though the one was not quite so grey, nor the other so wrinkled.'

'How came they so, bebee?'

'All along of this Gorgio, child.'

'The gentleman in the house, you mean, bebee.'

'Yes, child, the gentleman in the house. God grant that I may preserve my temper. Do you know, sir, my name? My name is Herne, which signifies a hairy individual, though neither grey-

haired nor wrinkled. It is not the nature of the Hernes to be grey or wrinkled, even when they are old, and I am not old.'

'How old are you, bebee?'

'Sixty-five years, child — an inconsiderable number. My mother was a hundred and one — a considerable age — when she died, yet she had not one grey hair, and not more than six wrinkles — an inconsiderable number.'

'She had no griefs, bebee?'

'Plenty, child, but not like mine.'

'Not quite so hard to bear, bebee?'

'No, child, my head wanders when I think of them. After the death of my husband, who came to his end untimeously, I went to live with a daughter of mine, married out among certain Romans who walk about the eastern counties, and with whom for some time I found a home and pleasant society, for they lived right Romanly, which gave my heart considerable satisfaction, who am a Roman born, and hope to die so. When I say right Romanly, I mean that they kept to themselves, and were not much given to blabbing about their private matters in promiscuous company. Well, things went on in this way for some time, when one day my son-in-law brings home a young Gorgio of singular and outrageous ugliness, and, without much preamble, says to me and to mine, "This is my pal, a'n't he a beauty! fall down and worship him."

“Hold,” said I, “I for one will never consent to such foolishness.””

‘That was right, bebee, I think I should have done the same.’

‘I think you would, child; but what was the profit of it? The whole party makes an almighty of this Gorgio, lets him into their ways, says prayers of his making, till things come to such a pass that my own daughter says to me, “I shall buy myself a veil and fan, and treat myself to a play and sacrament.” “Don’t,” says I; says she, “I should like for once in my life to be courtesied to as a Christian gentlewoman.”’

‘Very foolish of her, bebee.’

‘Wasn’t it, child? Where was I? At the fan and sacrament; with a heavy heart I put seven score miles between us, came back to the hairy ones, and found them over-given to Gorgious companions; said I, “foolish manners is catching, all this comes of that there Gorgio.” Answers the child Leonora, “Take comfort, bebee, I hate the Gorgios as much as you do.”’

‘And I say so again, bebee, as much or more.’

‘Time flows on, I engage in many matters, in most miscarry. Am sent to prison; says I to myself, I am become foolish. Am turned out of prison, and go back to the hairy ones, who receive me not over courteously; says I, for their unkindness, and my own foolishness, all the thanks to that Gorgio.

Answers to me the child, "I wish I could set my eyes upon him, bebee."

'I did so, bebee; go on.'

"How shall I know him, bebee," said the child. "Young and grey, tall, and speaks Romanly." Runs to me the child, and says, "I've found him, bebee." "Where, child?" says I. "Come with me, bebee," says the child. "That's he," says I, as I looked at my gentleman through the hedge.'

'Ha, ha! bebee, and here he lies, poisoned like a hog.'

'You have taken drows, sir,' said Mrs. Herne; 'do you hear, sir? drows; tip him a stave, child, of the song of poison.'

And thereupon the child clapped her hands, and sang —

'The Romany churl
And the Romany girl,
To-morrow shall hie
To poison the sty,
And bewitch on the mead
The farmer's steed.'

'Do you hear that, sir?' said Mrs. Herne; 'the child has tipped you a stave of the song of poison: that is, she has sung it Christianly, though perhaps you would like to hear it Romanly; you were always fond of what was Roman. Tip it him Romanly, child.'

'He has heard it Romanly already, bebee; 'twas by that I found him out, as I told you.'

‘Halloo, sir, are you sleeping? you have taken drows; the gentleman makes no answer. God give me patience!’

‘And what if he doesn’t, bebee; isn’t he poisoned like a hog? Gentleman, indeed! why call him gentleman? if he ever was one he’s broke, and is now a tinker, and a worker of blue metal.’

‘That’s his way, child, to-day a tinker, to-morrow something else; and as for being drabbed, I don’t know what to say about it.’

‘Not drabbed! what do you mean, bebee? but look there, bebee; ha, ha, look at the gentleman’s motions.’

‘He is sick, child, sure enough. Ho, ho! sir, you have taken drows; what, another throe! writhe, sir, writhe, the hog died by the drow of gipsies; I saw him stretched at evening. That’s yourself, sir. There is no hope, sir, no help, you have taken drow; shall I tell you your fortune, sir, your dukkerin? God bless you, pretty gentleman, much trouble will you have to suffer, and much water to cross; but never mind, pretty gentleman, you shall be fortunate at the end, and those who hate shall take off their hats to you.’

‘Hey, bebee!’ cried the girl; ‘what is this? what do you mean? you have blessed the Gorgio!’

‘Blessed him! no, sure; what did I say? Oh, I remember, I’m mad; well, I can’t help it, I said what the dukkerin dook told me; woe’s me, he’ll get up yet.’

‘Nonsense, bebee! Look at his motions, he’s drabbed, spite of dukkerin.’

‘Don’t say so, child; he’s sick, ’tis true, but don’t laugh at dukkerin, only folks do that that know no better. I, for one, will never laugh at the dukkerin dook. Sick again; I wish he was gone.’

‘He’ll soon be gone, bebee; let’s leave him. He’s as good as gone; look there, he’s dead.’

‘No, he’s not, he’ll get up — I feel it; can’t we hasten him?’

‘Hasten him! yes, to be sure; set the dog upon him. Here, juggal, look in there, my dog.’

The dog made its appearance at the door of the tent, and began to bark and tear up the ground.

‘At him, juggal, at him; he wished to poison, to drab you. Halloo!’

The dog barked violently, and seemed about to spring at my face, but retreated.

‘The dog won’t fly at him, child; he flashed at the dog with his eye, and scared him. He’ll get up.’

‘Nonsense, bebee! you make me angry; how should he get up?’

‘The dook tells me so, and, what’s more, I had a dream. I thought I was at York, standing amidst a crowd to see a man hung, and the crowd shouted, “There he comes!” and I looked, and, lo! it was the tinker; before I could cry with joy I was whisked away, and I found myself in Ely’s big church, which was chock full of people to hear the dean preach,

and all eyes were turned to the big pulpit; and presently I heard them say, "There he mounts!" and I looked up to the big pulpit, and, lo! the tinker was in the pulpit, and he raised his arm and began to preach. Anon, I found myself at York again, just as the drop fell, and I looked up, and I saw, not the tinker, but my own self hanging in the air.'

'You are going mad, bebee; if you want to hasten him, take your stick and poke him in the eye.'

'That will be of no use, child, the dukkerin tells me so; but I will try what I can do. Halloo, tinker! you must introduce yourself into a quiet family, and raise confusion — must you? You must steal its language, and, what was never done before, write it down Christianly — must you? Take that — and that'; and she stabbed violently with her stick towards the end of the tent.

'That's right, bebee, you struck his face; now once more, and let it be in the eye. Stay, what's that? get up, bebee.'

'What's the matter, child?'

'Some one is coming, come away.'

'Let me make sure of him, child; he'll be up yet.' And thereupon Mrs. Herne, rising, leaned forward into the tent, and supporting herself against the pole, took aim in the direction of the farther end. 'I will thrust out his eye,' said she; and, lunging with her stick, she would probably have accomplished her purpose had not at that moment the

pole of the tent given way, whereupon she fell to the ground, the canvas falling upon her and her intended victim.

‘Here’s a pretty affair, bebee,’ screamed the girl.

‘He’ll get up yet,’ said Mrs. Herne, from beneath the canvas.

‘Get up! — get up yourself; where are you? where is your —— Here, there, bebee, here’s the door; there, make haste, they are coming.’

‘He’ll get up yet,’ said Mrs. Herne, recovering her breath, ‘the dook tells me so.’

‘Never mind him or the dook; he is drabbed; come away, or we shall be grabbed — both of us.’

‘One more blow, I know where his head lies.’

‘You are mad, bebee; leave the fellow — Gorgio avella.’

And thereupon the females hurried away.

A vehicle of some kind was evidently drawing nigh; in a little time it came alongside of the place where lay the fallen tent, and stopped suddenly. There was a silence for a moment, and then a parley ensued between two voices, one of which was that of a woman. It was not in English, but in a deep guttural tongue.

‘Peth yw hono sydd yn gorwedd yna ar y ddaear?’ said a masculine voice.

‘Yn wirionedd — I do not know what it can be,’ said the female voice, in the same tongue.

‘Here is a cart, and there are tools; but what is that on the ground?’

‘Something moves beneath it; and what was that — a groan?’

‘Shall I get down?’

‘Of course, Peter, someone may want your help.’

‘Then I will get down, though I do not like this place, it is frequented by Egyptians, and I do not like their yellow faces, nor their clibberty clabber, as Master Ellis Wyn says. Now I am down. It is a tent, Winifred, and see, here is a boy beneath it. Merciful father! what a face!’

A middle-aged man, with a strongly marked and serious countenance, dressed in sober-coloured habiliments, had lifted up the stifling folds of the tent and was bending over me. ‘Can you speak, my lad?’ said he in English; ‘what is the matter with you? if you could but tell me, I could perhaps help you — What is it that you say? I can’t hear you. I will kneel down’; and he flung himself on the ground, and placed his ear close to my mouth. ‘Now speak if you can. Hey! what! no, sure, God forbid!’ then starting up, he cried to a female who sat in the cart, anxiously looking on — ‘Gwenwyn! gwenwyn! yw y gwas wedi ei gwenwynaw. The oil! Winifred, the oil!’

CHAPTER XXII

THE oil, which the strangers compelled me to take, produced the desired effect, though, during at least two hours, it was very doubtful whether or not my life would be saved. At the end of that period the man said that, with the blessing of God, he would answer for my life. He then demanded whether I thought I could bear to be removed from the place in which we were; 'for I like it not,' he continued, 'as something within me tells me that it is not good for any of us to be here.' I told him, as well as I was able, that I, too, should be glad to leave the place whereupon, after collecting my things, he harnessed my pony, and, with the assistance of the woman, he contrived to place me in the cart; he then gave me a draught out of a small phial, and we set forward at a slow pace, the man walking by the side of the cart in which I lay. It is probable that the draught consisted of a strong opiate, for after swallowing it I fell into a deep slumber; on my awakening, I found that the shadows of night had enveloped the earth — we were still moving on. Shortly, however, after descending a declivity, we turned into a lane, at the entrance of which was a gate. This lane conducted to a meadow, through the middle of which ran a small brook; it stood between two rising grounds

that on the left, which was on the farther side of the water, was covered with wood, whilst the one on the right, which was not so high, was crowned with the white walls of what appeared to be a farmhouse.

Advancing along the meadow, we presently came to a place where grew three immense oaks, almost on the side of the brook, over which they flung their arms, so as to shade it as with a canopy; the ground beneath was bare of grass, and nearly as hard and smooth as the floor of a barn. Having led his own cart on one side of the midmost tree, and my own on the other, the stranger said to me, 'This is the spot where my wife and myself generally tarry in the summer season, when we come into these parts. We are about to pass the night here. I suppose you will have no objection to do the same? Indeed, I do not see what else you could do under present circumstances.' After receiving my answer, in which I, of course, expressed my readiness to assent to his proposal, he proceeded to unharness his horse, and, feeling myself much better, I got down, and began to make the necessary preparations for passing the night beneath the oak.

Whilst thus engaged, I felt myself touched on the shoulder, and, looking round, perceived the woman, whom the stranger called Winifred, standing close to me. The moon was shining brightly upon her, and I observed that she was very good-looking, with

a composed, yet cheerful expression of countenance; her dress was plain and primitive, very much resembling that of a Quaker. She held a straw bonnet in her hand. 'I am glad to see thee moving about, young man,' said she, in a soft, placid tone; 'I could scarcely have expected it. Thou must be wondrous strong; many, after what thou hast suffered, would not have stood on their feet for weeks or months. What do I say? — Peter, my husband, who is skilled in medicine, just now told me that not one in five hundred would have survived what thou hast this day undergone; but allow me to ask thee one thing, Hast thou returned thanks to God for thy deliverance?' I made no answer, and the woman, after a pause, said, 'Excuse me, young man, but do you know anything of God?' 'Very little,' I replied, 'but I should say He must be a wondrous strong person if He made all those big bright things up above there, to say nothing of the ground on which we stand, which bears beings like these oaks, each of which is fifty times as strong as myself, and will live twenty times as long.' The woman was silent for some moments, and then said, 'I scarcely know in what spirit thy words are uttered. If thou art serious, however, I would caution thee against supposing that the power of God is more manifested in these trees, or even in those bright stars above us, than in thyself — they are things of time, but thou art a being destined to an

eternity, it depends upon thyself whether thy eternity shall be one of joy or sorrow.'

Here she was interrupted by the man, who exclaimed from the other side of the tree, 'Winifred, it is getting late, you had better go up to the house on the hill to inform our friends of our arrival, or they will have retired for the night.' 'True,' said Winifred, and forthwith wended her way to the house in question, returning shortly with another woman, whom the man, speaking in the same language which I had heard him first use, greeted by the name of Mary; the woman replied in the same tongue, but almost immediately said, in English, 'We hoped to have heard you speak to-night, Peter, but we cannot expect that now, seeing that it is so late, owing to your having been detained by the way, as Winifred tells me; nothing remains for you to do but to sup — to-morrow, with God's will, we shall hear you.' 'And to-night, also, with God's will, provided you be so disposed. Let those of your family come hither.' 'They will be hither presently,' said Mary, 'for knowing that thou art arrived, they will, of course, come and bid thee welcome.' And scarcely had she spoke, when I beheld a party of people descending the moonlit side of the hill. They soon arrived at the place where we were; they might amount in all to twelve individuals. The principal person was a tall, athletic man, of about forty, dressed like a plain country farmer;

this was, I soon found, the husband of Mary; the rest of the group consisted of the children of these two, and their domestic servants. One after another they all shook Peter by the hand, men and women, boys and girls, and expressed their joy at seeing him. After which, he said, 'Now, friends, if you please, I will speak a few words to you.' A stool was then brought him from the cart, which he stepped on, and the people arranging themselves round him, some standing, some seated on the ground, he forthwith began to address them in a clear, distinct voice; and the subject of his discourse was the necessity, in all human beings, of a change of heart.

The preacher was better than his promise, for, instead of speaking a few words, he preached for at least three quarters of an hour; none of the audience, however, showed the slightest symptom of weariness; on the contrary, the hope of each individual appeared to hang upon the words which proceeded from his mouth. At the conclusion of the sermon or discourse, the whole assembly again shook Peter by the hand, and returned to their house, the mistress of the family saying, as she departed, 'I shall soon be back, Peter, I go but to make arrangements for the supper of thyself and company'; and, in effect, she presently returned, attended by a young woman who bore a tray in her hands. 'Set it down, Jessy,' said the mistress to the

girl, 'and then betake thyself to thy rest; I shall remain here for a little time to talk with my friends.' The girl departed, and the preacher and the two females placed themselves on the ground about the tray. The man gave thanks, and himself and his wife appeared to be about to eat, when the latter suddenly placed her hand upon his arm, and said something to him in a low voice, whereupon he exclaimed, 'Ay, truly we were both forgetful'; and then getting up, he came towards me, who stood a little way off, leaning against the wheel of my cart; and, taking me by the hand, he said, 'Pardon us, young man, we were both so engaged in our own creature comforts, that we forgot thee, but it is not too late to repair our fault; wilt thou not join us, and taste our bread and milk?' 'I cannot eat,' I replied, 'but I think I could drink a little milk'; whereupon he led me to the rest, and seating me by his side, he poured some milk into a horn cup, saying, "'Croesaw." That,' added he with a smile, 'is Welsh for welcome.'

The fare upon the tray was of the simplest description, consisting of bread, cheese, milk, and curds. My two friends partook with a good appetite.

I slept soundly during that night, partly owing to the influence of the opiate. Early in the morning I was awakened by the voice of Peter and his wife, who were singing a morning hymn in their own lan-

guage. Both subsequently prayed long and fervently. I lay still till their devotions were completed, and then left my tent. 'Good morning,' said Peter, 'how dost thou feel?' 'Much better,' said I, 'than I could have expected.' 'I am glad of it,' said Peter. 'Art thou hungry? yonder comes our breakfast,' pointing to the same young woman I had seen the preceding night, who was again descending the hill, bearing the tray upon her head.

'What dost thou intend to do, young man, this day?' said Peter, when we had about half finished breakfast. 'Do,' said I, 'as I do other days, what I can.' 'And dost thou pass this day as thou dost other days?' said Peter. 'Why not?' said I; 'What is there in this day different from the rest? it seems to be of the same colour as yesterday.' 'Art thou aware,' said the wife, interposing, 'what day it is? that it is Sabbath? that it is Sunday?' 'No,' said I, 'I did not know that it was Sunday.' 'And how did that happen?' said Winifred, with a sigh. 'To tell you the truth,' said I, 'I live very much alone, and pay very little heed to the passing of time.' 'And yet of what infinite importance is time,' said Winifred. 'Art thou not aware that every year brings thee nearer to thy end!' 'I do not think,' said I, 'that I am so near my end as I was yesterday.' 'Yes, thou art,' said the woman; 'thou wast not doomed to die yesterday; an invisible hand was watching over thee yesterday; but thy day will

come, therefore improve the time. Be grateful that thou wast saved yesterday; and, oh! reflect on one thing; if thou hadst died yesterday, where wouldst thou have been now?' 'Cast into the earth, perhaps,' said I. 'I have heard Mr. Petulengro say that to be cast into the earth is the natural end of man.' 'Who is Mr. Petulengro?' said Peter, interrupting his wife, as she was about to speak. 'Master of the horseshoe,' said I; 'and, according to his own account, King of Egypt.' 'I understand,' said Peter, 'head of some family of wandering Egyptians — they are a race utterly godless. Art thou of them? — but no, thou art not, thou hast not their yellow blood. I suppose thou belongest to the family of wandering artisans called ——; I do not like you the worse for belonging to them. A mighty speaker of old sprang up from amidst that family.' 'Who was he?' said I. 'John Bunyan,' replied Peter, reverently, 'and the mention of his name remembers me that I have to preach this day; wilt thou go and hear? the distance is not great, only half a mile.' 'No,' said I, 'I will not go and hear.' 'Wherefore?' said Peter. 'I belong to the church,' said I, 'and not to the congregations.' 'Oh! the pride of that church,' said Peter, addressing his wife in their own tongue, 'exemplified even in the lowest and most ignorant of its members.' 'Then thou, doubtless, meanest to go to church,' said Peter, again addressing me; 'there is a church on

the other side of that wooded hill.' 'No,' said I, 'I do not mean to go to church.' 'May I ask thee wherefore?' said Peter. 'Because,' said I, 'I prefer remaining beneath the shade of these trees, listening to the sound of the leaves and tinkling of the waters.'

'Then thou intendest to remain here?' said Peter looking fixedly at me. 'If I do not intrude,' said I; 'but if I do, I will wander away; I wish to be beholden to nobody — perhaps you wish me to go?' 'On the contrary,' said Peter, 'I wish you to stay. I begin to see something in thee which has much interest for me; but we must now bid thee farewell for the rest of the day, the time is drawing nigh for us to repair to the place of preaching; before we leave thee alone, however, I should wish to ask thee a question — Didst thou seek thy own destruction yesterday, and didst thou deliberately take that poison?' 'No,' said I, 'had I known there had been poison in the cake, I certainly should not have taken it.' 'And who gave it thee?' said Peter. 'An enemy of mine,' I replied. 'Who is thy enemy?' 'An Egyptian sorceress and poisonmonger.' 'Thy enemy is a female. I fear thou hadst given her cause to hate thee — of what did she complain?' 'That I had stolen the tongue out of her head.' 'I do not understand thee — is she young?' 'About sixty-five.'

Here Winifred interposed. 'Thou didst call her

just now by hard names, young man,' said she; 'I trust thou dost bear no malice against her.' 'No,' said I, 'I bear no malice against her.' 'Thou art not wishing to deliver her into the hand of what is called justice?' 'By no means,' said I; 'I have lived long enough upon the roads not to cry out for the constable when my finger is broken. I consider this poisoning as an accident of the roads; one of those to which those who travel are occasionally subject.' 'In short, thou forgivest thine adversary?' 'Both now and for ever,' said I. 'Truly,' said Winifred, 'the spirit which the young man displayeth pleases me much: I should be loth that he left us yet. I have no doubt that, with the blessing of God, and a little of thy exhortation, he will turn out a true Christian before he leaveth us.' 'My exhortation!' said Peter, and a dark shade passed over his countenance; 'thou forgettest what I am — I — I — but I am forgetting myself; the Lord's will be done; and now put away the things, for I perceive that our friends are coming to attend us to the place of meeting.'

Again the family which I had seen the night before descended the hill from their abode. They were now dressed in their Sunday's best. The master of the house led the way. They presently joined us, when a quiet sober greeting ensued on each side. After a little time Peter shook me by the hand and bade me farewell till the evening; Winifred did the

same, adding that she hoped I should be visited by sweet and holy thoughts. The whole party then moved off in the direction by which we had come the preceding night, Peter and the master leading the way, followed by Winifred and the mistress of the family. As I gazed on their departing forms, I felt almost inclined to follow them to their place of worship. I did not stir, however, but remained leaning against my oak with my hands behind me.

And after a time I sat me down at the foot of the oak with my face turned towards the water, and, folding my hands, I fell into deep meditation. I thought on the early Sabbaths of my life, and the manner in which I was wont to pass them. How carefully I said my prayers when I got up on the Sabbath morn, and how carefully I combed my hair and brushed my clothes in order that I might do credit to the Sabbath day. I thought of the old church at pretty D——, the dignified rector, and yet more dignified clerk. I thought of England's grand Liturgy, and Tate and Brady's sonorous minstrelsy. I thought of the Holy Book, portions of which I was in the habit of reading between service. I thought, too, of the evening walk which I sometimes took in fine weather like the present, with my mother and brother — a quiet, sober walk, during which I would not break into a run, even to chase a butterfly, or yet more a honey-bee, being fully convinced of the dread importance of the day

which God had hallowed. And how glad I was when I had got over the Sabbath day without having done anything to profane it. And how soundly I slept on the Sabbath night after the toil of being very good throughout the day.

And when I had mused on those times a long while, I sighed and said to myself, I am much altered since then; am I altered for the better? And then I looked at my hands and my apparel, and sighed again. I was not wont of yore to appear thus on the Sabbath day.

For a long time I continued in a state of deep meditation, till at last I lifted up my eyes to the sun, which, as usual during that glorious summer, was shining in unclouded majesty; and then I lowered them to the sparkling water, in which hundreds of the finny brood were disporting themselves, and then I thought what a fine thing it was to be a fish on such a fine summer day, and I wished myself a fish, or at least amongst the fishes; and then I looked at my hands again, and then, bending over the water, I looked at my face in the crystal mirror, and started when I saw it, for it looked squalid and miserable.

Forthwith I started up, and said to myself, I should like to bathe and cleanse myself from the squalor produced by my late hard life and by Mrs. Herne's drow. I wonder if there is any harm in bathing on the Sabbath day. I will ask Winifred

when she comes home; in the meantime I will bathe, provided I can find a fitting place.

But the brook, though a very delightful place for fish to disport in, was shallow, and by no means adapted for the recreation of so large a being as myself; it was, moreover, exposed, though I saw nobody at hand, nor heard a single human voice or sound. Following the winding of the brook I left the meadow, and, passing through two or three thickets, came to a place where between lofty banks the water ran deep and dark, and there I bathed, imbibing new tone and vigour into my languid and exhausted frame.

Having put on my clothes, I returned by the way I had come to my vehicle beneath the oak tree. From thence, from want of something better to do, I strolled up the hill, on the top of which stood the farmhouse; it was a large and commodious building, built principally of stone, and seeming of some antiquity, with a porch, on either side of which was an oaken bench. On the right was seated a young woman with a book in her hand, the same who had brought the tray to my friends and myself.

‘Good-day,’ said I, ‘pretty damsel, sitting in the farm porch.’

‘Good-day,’ said the girl, looking at me for a moment, and then fixing her eyes on her book.

‘That’s a nice book you are reading,’ said I.

The girl looked at me with surprise. ‘How do you know what book it is?’ said she.

‘How do I know — never mind; but a nice book it is — no love, no fortune-telling in it.’

The girl looked at me half offended. ‘Fortune-telling!’ said she; ‘I should think not. But you know nothing about it’; and she bent her head once more over the book.

‘I tell you what, young person,’ said I, ‘I know all about that book; what will you wager that I do not?’

‘I never wager,’ said the girl.

‘Shall I tell you the name of it,’ said I, ‘O daughter of the dairy?’

The girl half started. ‘I should never have thought,’ said she half timidly, ‘that you could have guessed it.’

‘I did not guess it,’ said I, ‘I knew it; and meet and proper it is that you should read it.’

‘Why so?’ said the girl.

‘Can the daughter of the dairy read a more fitting book than the *Dairyman’s Daughter*?’

‘Where do you come from?’ said the girl.

‘Out of the water,’ said I. ‘Don’t start, I have been bathing; are you fond of the water?’

‘No,’ said the girl, heaving a sigh; ‘I am not fond of the water, that is, of the sea’; and here she sighed again.

‘The sea is a wide gulf,’ said I, ‘and frequently separates hearts.’

The girl sobbed.

‘Why are you alone here?’ said I.

‘I take my turn with the rest,’ said the girl, ‘to keep at home on Sunday.’

‘And you are ——’ said I.

‘The master’s niece!’ said the girl. ‘How came you to know it? But why did you not go with the rest and with your friends?’

‘Who are those you call my friends?’ said I.

‘Peter and his wife.’

‘And who are they?’ said I.

‘Do you not know?’ said the girl; ‘you came with them.’

‘They found me ill by the way,’ said I; ‘and they relieved me: I know nothing about them.’

‘I thought you knew everything,’ said the girl.

‘There are two or three things which I do not know, and this is one of them. Who are they?’

‘Did you never hear of the great Welsh preacher, Peter Williams?’

‘Never,’ said I.

‘Well,’ said the girl, ‘this is he, and Winifred is his wife, and a nice person she is. Some people say, indeed, that she is as good a preacher as her husband, though of that matter I can say nothing, having never heard her preach. So these two wander over all Wales and the greater part of England, comforting the hearts of the people with their doctrine, and doing all the good they can. They frequently come here, for the mistress is a Welsh

woman, and an old friend of both, and then they take up their abode in the cart beneath the old oaks down there by the stream.'

'And what is their reason for doing so?' said I; 'would it not be more comfortable to sleep beneath a roof?'

'I know not their reasons,' said the girl, 'but so it is; they never sleep beneath a roof unless the weather is very severe. I once heard the mistress say that Peter had something heavy upon his mind; perhaps that is the cause. If he is unhappy, all I can say is, that I wish him otherwise, for he is a good man and a kind ——'

'Thank you,' said I, 'I will now depart.'

'Hem!' said the girl, 'I was wishing ——'

'What? to ask me a question?'

'Not exactly; but you seem to know everything; you mentioned, I think, fortune-telling.'

'Do you wish me to tell your fortune?'

'By no means; but I have a friend at a distance at sea, and I should wish to know ——'

'When he will come back? I have told you already there are two or three things which I do not know — this is another of them. However, I should not be surprised if he were to come back some of these days; I would, if I were in his place. In the meantime be patient, attend to the dairy, and read the *Dairyman's Daughter* when you have nothing better to do.'

It was late in the evening when the party of the morning returned. The farmer and his family repaired at once to their abode, and my two friends joined me beneath the tree. Peter sat down at the foot of the oak, and said nothing. Supper was brought by a servant, not the damsel of the porch. We sat round the tray, Peter said grace, but scarcely anything else; he appeared sad and dejected, his wife looked anxiously upon him. I was as silent as my friends; after a little time we retired to our separate places of rest.

On the next day everything was ready for our departure. The good family of the house came to bid us farewell. There was shaking of hands and kisses, as on the night of our arrival.

And as I stood somewhat apart the young girl of whom I have spoken came up to me, and holding out her hand, said, 'Farewell, young man, wherever thou goest.' Then, after looking around her, she said, 'It was all true you told me. Yesterday I received a letter from him thou wottest of; he is coming soon. God bless you, young man! who would have thought thou knewest so much!'

So after we had taken our farewell of the good family, we departed, proceeding in the direction of Wales. Peter was very cheerful, and enlivened the way with godly discourse and spiritual hymns, some of which were in the Welsh language.

We were now drawing very near the hills, and

Peter said, 'If you are to go into Wales, you must presently decide, for we are close upon the border.'

'Which is the border?' said I.

'Yon small brook,' said Peter, 'into which the man on horseback, who is coming towards us, is now entering.'

'I see it,' said I, 'and the man; he stops in the middle of it, as if to water his steed.'

We proceeded till we had nearly reached the brook. 'Well,' said Peter, 'will you go into Wales?'

'What should I do in Wales?' I demanded.

'Do!' said Peter, smiling; 'learn Welsh.'

I stopped my little pony. 'Then I need not go into Wales; I already know Welsh.'

'Know Welsh!' said Peter, staring at me.

'Know Welsh!' said Winifred, stopping her cart.

'How and when did you learn it?' said Peter.

'From books, in my boyhood.'

'Read Welsh!' said Peter, 'is it possible?'

'Read Welsh!' said Winifred, 'is it possible?'

'Well, I hope you will come with us,' said Peter.

'Come with us, young man,' said Winifred; 'let me, on the other side of the brook, welcome you into Wales.'

'Thank you both,' said I, 'but I will not come.'

'Wherefore?' exclaimed both simultaneously.

'Because it is neither fit nor proper that I cross into Wales at this time, and in this manner. When I go into Wales, I should wish to go in a new suit of

superfine black, with hat and beaver, mounted on a powerful steed, black and glossy, like that which bore Greduv to the fight of Catraeth. I should wish, moreover, to see the Welshmen assembled on the border ready to welcome me with pipe and fiddle, and much whooping and shouting, and to attend me to Wexham, or even as far as Machynllaith, where I should wish to be invited to a dinner at which all the bards should be present, and to be seated at the right hand of the president, who, when the cloth was removed, should arise, and, amidst cries of silence, exclaim — “Brethren and Welshmen, allow me to propose the health of my most respectable friend the translator of the odes of the great Ab Gwilym, the pride and glory of Wales.”

‘How!’ said Peter; ‘hast thou translated the works of the mighty Dafydd?’

‘With notes critical, historical, and explanatory.’

‘Come with us, friend,’ said Peter. ‘I cannot promise such a dinner as thou wishest, but neither pipe nor fiddle shall be wanting.’

‘Come with us, young man,’ said Winifred, ‘even as thou art, and the daughters of Wales shall bid thee welcome.’

‘I will not go with you,’ said I. ‘Dost thou see that man in the ford?’

‘Who is staring at us so, and whose horse has not yet done drinking? Of course I see him.’

‘I shall turn back with him. God bless you!’

‘Go back with him not,’ said Peter; ‘he is one of those whom I like not, one of the clibberty-clabber, as Master Ellis Wyn observes — turn not with that man.’

‘Go not back with him,’ said Winifred. ‘If thou goest with that man, thou wilt soon forget all our profitable counsels; come with us.’

‘I cannot; I have much to say to him. Kosko Divous, Mr. Petulengro.’

‘Kosko Divous, Pal,’ said Mr. Petulengro, riding through the water; ‘are you turning back?’

I turned back with Mr. Petulengro.

Peter came running after me: ‘One moment, young man, who and what are you?’

‘I must answer in the words of Taliesin,’ said I; ‘none can say with positiveness whether I be fish or flesh, least of all myself. God bless you both!’

‘Take this,’ said Peter; and he thrust his Welsh Bible into my hand.

CHAPTER XXIII

So I turned back with Mr. Petulengro. We travelled for some time in silence; at last we fell into discourse. 'You have been in Wales, Mr. Petulengro?'

'Ay, truly, brother.'

'What have you been doing there?'

'Assisting at a funeral.'

'At whose funeral?'

'Mrs. Herne's, brother.'

'Is she dead, then?'

'As a nail, brother.'

'How did she die?'

'By hanging, brother.'

'I am lost in astonishment,' said I; whereupon Mr. Petulengro, lifting his sinister leg over the neck of his steed, and adjusting himself sideways in the saddle, replied, with great deliberation, 'Two days ago, I happened to be at a fair not very far from here; I was all alone by myself, for our party were upwards of forty miles off, when who should come up but a chap that I knew, a relation, or rather, a connection of mine; one of those Hernes. "Ar'n't you going to the funeral!" said he; and then, brother, there passed between him and me, in the way of questioning and answering, much the same as has

just now passed between I and you; but when he mentioned hanging, I thought I could do no less than ask who hanged her, which you forgot to do. "Who hanged her?" said I; and then the man told me that she had done it herself; been her own hinjiri; and then I thought to myself what a sin and shame it would be if I did not go to the funeral, seeing that she was my own mother-in-law. I would have brought my wife, and, indeed, the whole of our party, but there was no time for that; they were too far off, and the dead was to be buried early the next morning, so I went with the man, and he led me into Wales, where his party had lately retired, and when there, through many wild and desolate places to their encampment, and there I found the Hernes, and the dead body — the last laid out in a mattress, in a tent, dressed Romaneskoenæs in a red cloak, and big bonnet of black beaver. I must say for the Hernes that they took the matter very coolly, some were eating, others drinking, and some were talking about their small affairs; there was one, however, who did not take the matter so coolly, but took on enough for the whole family, sitting beside the dead woman, tearing her hair, and refusing to take either meat or drink; it was the child Leonora. I arrived at nightfall, and the burying was not to take place till the morning, which I was rather sorry for, as I am not very fond of them Hernes, who are not very fond of anybody. They

never asked me to eat or drink, notwithstanding I had married into the family; one of them, however, came up and offered to fight me for five shillings; had it not been for them, I should have come back as empty as I went — he didn't stand up five minutes. Brother, I passed the night as well as I could, beneath a tree, for the tents were full, and not over clean; I slept little, and had my eyes about me, for I knew the kind of people I was among.

‘Early in the morning the funeral took place. The body was placed not in a coffin but on a bier, and carried not to a churchyard but to a deep dell close by; and there it was buried beneath a rock, dressed just as I have told you; and this was done by the bidding of Leonora, who had heard her bebee say that she wished to be buried, not in gorgeous fashion, but like a Roman woman of the old blood, the *kosko puro rati*, brother. When it was over, and we had got back to the encampment, I prepared to be going. Before mounting my gry, however, I bethought me to ask what could have induced the dead woman to make away with herself, a thing so uncommon amongst Romanies; whereupon one squinted with his eyes, a second spirted saliva into the air, and a third said that he neither knew nor cared; she was a good riddance, having more than once been nearly the ruin of them all, from the quantity of brimstone she carried about her. One, however, I suppose, rather ashamed of

the way in which they had treated me, said at last, that if I wanted to know all about the matter, none could tell me better than the child, who was in all her secrets, and was not a little like her; so I looked about for the child, but could find her nowhere. At last the same man told me that he shouldn't wonder if I found her at the grave; so I went back to the grave, and sure enough there I found the child, Leonora, seated on the ground above the body, crying and taking on; so I spoke kindly to her, and said, how came all this, Leonora? tell me all about it. It was a long time before I could get any answer; at last she opened her mouth, and spoke, and these were the words she said, "It was all along of your pal"; and then she told me all about the matter. How Mrs. Herne could not abide you, which I knew before, and that she had sworn your destruction, which I did not know before. And then she told me how she found you living in the wood by yourself, and how you were enticed to eat a poisoned cake; and she told me many other things that you wot of, and she told me what perhaps you don't wot, namely, that finding that you had been removed, she, the child, had tracked you a long way, and found you at last well and hearty, and no ways affected by the poison, and heard you, as she stood concealed, disputing about religion with a Welsh Methody. Well, brother, she told me all this; and moreover, that when Mrs. Herne heard of it, she

said that a dream of hers had come to pass. I don't know what it was, but something about herself, a tinker, and a dean; and then she added, that it was all up with her, and that she must take a long journey. Well, brother, that same night Leonora, waking from her sleep in the tent, where Mrs. Herne and she were wont to sleep, missed her bebee, and becoming alarmed, went in search of her, and at last found her hanging from a branch; and when the child had got so far, she took on violently, and I could not get another word from her; so I left her, and here I am.'

'And I am glad to see you, Mr. Petulengro; but this is sad news which you tell me about Mrs. Herne.'

'Somewhat dreary, brother; yet perhaps, after all, it is a good thing that she is removed; she carried so much devil's tinder about with her, as the man said.'

'I am sorry for her,' said I; 'more especially as I am the cause of her death — though the innocent one.'

'She could not bide you, brother, that's certain; but that is no reason,' said Mr. Petulengro, balancing himself upon the saddle — 'That is no reason why she should prepare drow to take away your essence of life; and, when disappointed, to hang herself upon a tree: if she was dissatisfied with you, she might have flown at you, and scratched your face;

or, if she did not judge herself your match, she might have put down five shillings for a turn-up between you and someone she thought could beat you — myself, for example, and so the matter might have ended comfortably; but she was always too fond of covert ways, drows, and brimstones. This is not the first poisoning affair she has been engaged in.'

'You allude to drabbing bawlor.'

'Bah!' said Mr. Petulengro; 'there's no harm in that. No, no! she has cast drows in her time for other guess things than bawlor; both Gorgios and Roman have tasted of them, and died. Did you ever hear of the poisoned plum pudding?'

'Never.'

'Then I will tell you about it. It happened about six years ago, a few months after she had quitted us — she had gone first amongst her own people, as she called them; but there was another small party of Romans, with whom she soon became very intimate. It so happened that this small party got into trouble; whether it was about a horse or an ass, or passing bad money, no matter to you and me, who had no hand in the business; three or four of them were taken and lodged in —— Castle, and amongst them was a woman; but the sherengro, or principal man of the party, and who it seems had most hand in the affair, was still at large. All of a sudden a rumour was spread abroad that the woman was

about to play false, and to peach the rest. Said the principal man, when he heard it, "If she does, I am nashkado." Mrs. Herne was then on a visit to the party, and when she heard the principal man take on so, she said, "But I suppose you know what to do?" "I do not," said he. "Then hir mi devlis," said she, "you are a fool. But leave the matter to me, I know how to dispose of her in Roman fashion." Why she wanted to interfere in the matter, brother, I don't know, unless it was from pure brimstoneness of disposition — she had no hand in the matter which had brought the party into trouble — she was only on a visit, and it happened before she came; but she was always ready to give dangerous advice. Well, brother, the principal man listened to what she had to say, and let her do what she would; and she made a pudding, a very nice one, no doubt — for, besides plums, she put in drows and all the Roman condiments that she knew of; and she gave it to the principal man, and the principal man put it into a basket and directed it to the woman in —— Castle, and the woman in the castle took it and ——'

'Ate of it,' said I, 'just like my case?'

'Quite different, brother, she took it, it is true; but instead of giving way to her appetite as you might have done, she put it before the rest whom she was going to impeach — perhaps she wished to see how they liked it before she tasted it herself

— and all the rest were poisoned, and one died, and there was a precious outcry, and the woman cried the loudest of all; and she said, “it was my death was sought for; I know the man, and I’ll be revenged,” and then the Poknees spoke to her and said, “Where can we find him?” and she said, “I am awake to his motions; three weeks from hence, the night before the full moon, at such and such an hour, he will pass down such a lane with such a man.”

‘Well,’ said I, ‘and what did the Poknees do?’

‘Do, brother, sent for a plastramengro from Bow Street, quite secretly, and told him what the woman had said; and the night before the full moon, the plastramengro went to the place which the juwa had pointed out, all alone, brother; and, in order that he might not be too late, he went two hours before his time. I know the place well, brother, where the plastramengro placed himself behind a thick holly tree at the end of a lane where a gate leads into various fields, through which there is a path for carts and horses. The lane is called the dark lane by the Gorgios, being much shaded by trees; so the plastramengro placed himself in the dark lane behind the holly tree; it was a cold February night, dreary, though; the wind blew in gusts, and the moon had not yet risen, and the plastramengro waited behind the tree till he was tired, and thought he might as well sit down; so he sat down, and was

not long in falling to sleep, and there he slept for some hours; and when he awoke the moon had risen, and was shining bright, so that there was a kind of moonlight even in the dark lane; and the plastramengro pulled out his watch and contrived to make out that it was just two hours beyond the time when the men should have passed by. Brother, I do not know what the plastramengro thought of himself, but I know, brother, what I should have thought of myself in his situation. I should have thought, brother, that I was a drowsy scoppelo, and that I had let the fellow pass by whilst I was sleeping behind a bush. As it turned out, however, his going to sleep did no harm, but quite the contrary; just as he was going away he heard a gate slam in the direction of the fields, and then he heard the low stumping of horses as if on soft ground, for the path in those fields is generally soft, and at that time it had been lately ploughed up. Well, brother, presently he saw two men on horseback coming towards the lane through the field behind the gate; the man who rode foremost was a tall, big fellow, the very man he was in quest of; the other was a smaller chap, not so small either, but a light, wiry fellow, and a proper master of his hands when he sees occasion for using them. Well, brother, the foremost man came to the gate, reached at the hank, undid it, and rode through, holding it open for the other. Before, however, the other could follow into the

lane, out bolted the plastramengro from behind the tree, kicked the gate to with his foot, and, seizing the big man on horseback, "You are my prisoner," said he. I am of opinion, brother, that plastramengro, notwithstanding he went to sleep, must have been a regular fine fellow.'

'I am entirely of your opinion,' said I; 'but what happened then?'

'Why, brother, the Romany chal, after he had somewhat recovered from his surprise, for it is rather uncomfortable to be laid hold of at night-time and told you are a prisoner, more especially when you happen to have two or three things on your mind, which, if proved against you, would carry you to the nashky. The Romany chal, I say, clubbed his whip and aimed a blow at the plastramengro, which, if it had hit him on the skull, as was intended, would very likely have cracked it. The plastramengro, however, received it partly on his staff, so that it did him no particular damage. Whereupon, seeing what kind of customer he had to deal with, he dropped his staff and seized the chal with both his hands, who forthwith spurred his horse, hoping by doing so either to break away from him or fling him down; but it would not do — the plastramengro held on like a bulldog, so that the Romany chal, to escape being hauled to the ground, suddenly flung himself off the saddle, and then happened in that lane, close by the gate, such

fresh heart no doubt; "It's of no use," said he, "you had better give in, hold out your hands for the darbies or I will throttle you."

'And what did the other fellow do who came with the chal?' said I.

'I sat still on my horse, brother.'

'You,' said I. 'Were you the man?'

'I was he, brother.'

'And why did you not help your comrade?'

'I have fought in the ring, brother.'

'And what had fighting in the ring to do with fighting in the lane?'

'You mean not fighting. A great deal, brother; it taught me to prize fair play. When I fought Staffordshire Dick, t'other side of London, I was alone, brother. Not a Romany chal to back me, and he had all his brother pals about him; but they gave me fair play, brother; and I beat Staffordshire Dick, which I couldn't have done had they put one finger on his side the scale, for he was as good a man as myself, or nearly so. Now, brother, had I but bent a finger in favour of the Romany chal, the plastramengro would never have come alive out of the lane; but I did not, for I thought to myself fair play is a precious stone; so you see, brother ——'

'That you are quite right, Mr. Petulengro; I see that clearly; and now, pray proceed with your narration, it is both moral and entertaining.'

But Mr. Petulengro did not proceed with his nar-

ration, neither did he proceed upon his way; he had stopped his horse, and his eyes were intently fixed on a broad strip of grass beneath some lofty trees on the left side of the road. It was a pleasant enough spot, and seemed to invite wayfaring people such as we were to rest from the fatigues of the road and the heat and vehemence of the sun. After examining it for a considerable time Mr. Petulengro said, 'I say, brother, that would be a nice place for a tussle!'

'I daresay it would,' said I, 'if two people were inclined to fight.'

'The ground is smooth,' said Mr. Petulengro; 'without holes or ruts, and the trees cast much shade. I don't think, brother, that we could find a better place,' said Mr. Petulengro, springing from his horse.

'But you and I don't want to fight!'

'Speak for yourself, brother,' said Mr. Petulengro. 'However, I will tell you how the matter stands. There is a point at present between us. There can be no doubt that you are the cause of Mrs. Herne's death, innocently, you will say, but still the cause. Now, I shouldn't like it to be known that I went up and down the country with a pal who was the cause of my mother-in-law's death, that's to say, unless he gave me satisfaction. Now, if I and my pal have a tussle, he gives me satisfaction, and if he knocks my eyes out, which I know

you can't do, it makes no difference at all, he gives me satisfaction, and he who says to the contrary knows nothing of gipsy law, and is a dinelo into the bargain.'

'But we have no gloves!'

'Gloves!' said Mr. Petulengro contemptuously, 'gloves! I tell you what, brother, I always thought you were a better hand at the gloves than the naked fist, and, to tell you the truth, besides taking satisfaction for Mrs. Herne's death, I wish to see what you can do with your morleys; so now is your time, brother, and this is your place, grass and shade, no ruts or holes; come on, brother, or I shall think you what I should not like to call you.'

CHAPTER XXIV

AND when I heard Mr. Petulengro talk in this manner, which I had never heard him do before, and which I can only account for by his being fasting and ill-tempered, I had of course no other alternative than to accept his challenge; so I put myself into a posture which I deemed the best both for offence and defence, and the tussle commenced; and when it had endured for about half an hour, Mr. Petulengro said, 'brother, there is much blood on your face, you had better wipe it off'; and when I had wiped it off, and again resumed my former attitude, Mr. Petulengro said, 'I think enough has been done, brother, in the affair of the old woman; I have, moreover, tried what you are able to do, and find you, as I thought, less apt with the naked morleys than the stuffed gloves; nay, brother, put your hand down; I'm satisfied, blood has been shed, which is all that can be reasonably expected for an old woman, who carried so much brimstone about her as Mrs. Herne.'

So the struggle ended, and we resumed our route, Mr. Petulengro sitting sideways upon his horse as before, and I driving my little pony-cart; and when we had proceeded about three miles, we came to a small public-house, which bore the sign of the Silent

Woman, where we stopped to refresh our cattle and ourselves; and as we sat over our bread and ale, it came to pass that Mr. Petulengro asked me various questions, and amongst others, how I intended to dispose of myself. I told him that I did not know; whereupon, with considerable frankness, he invited me to his camp, and told me that if I chose to settle down amongst them, and become a Romany chal, I should have his wife's sister, Ursula, who was still unmarried, and occasionally talked of me.

I declined his offer, assigning as a reason the recent death of Mrs. Herne, of which I was the cause, although innocent. 'A pretty life I should lead with those two,' said I, 'when they came to know it.' 'Pooh,' said Mr. Petulengro, 'they will never know it. I sh'n't blab, and as for Leonora, that girl has a head on her shoulders.' 'Unlike the woman in the sign,' said I, 'whose head is cut off. You speak nonsense, Mr. Petulengro; as long as a woman has a head on her shoulders she'll talk, — but, leaving women out of the case, it is impossible to keep anything a secret; an old master of mine told me so long ago. I have moreover another reason for declining your offer. I am at present not disposed for society. I am become fond of solitude. I wish I could find some quiet place to which I could retire to hold communion with my own thoughts, and practise, if I thought fit, either of my trades.' 'What trades?' said Mr. Petulengro. 'Why, the one which I have

lately been engaged in, or my original one, which I confess I should like better, that of a kaulomesco.' 'Ah, I have frequently heard you talk of making horse-shoes,' said Mr. Petulengro. 'I, however, never saw you make one, and no one else that I am aware; I don't believe — come, brother, don't be angry, it's quite possible that you may have done things which neither I nor anyone else has seen you do, and that such things may some day or other come to light, as you say nothing can be kept secret. Be that, however, as it may, pay the reckoning and let us be going; I think I can advise you to just such a kind of place as you seem to want.'

'And how do you know that I have got where-withal to pay the reckoning?' I demanded. 'Brother,' said Mr. Petulengro, 'I was just now looking in your face, which exhibited the very look of a person conscious of the possession of property; there was nothing hungry or sneaking in it. Pay the reckoning, brother.'

And when we were once more upon the road Mr. Petulengro began to talk of the place which he conceived would serve me as a retreat under present circumstances. 'I tell you frankly, brother, that it is a queer kind of place, and I am not very fond of pitching my tent in it, it is so surprisingly dreary. It is in a deep dingle in the midst of a large field, on an estate about which there has been a lawsuit for some years past. I daresay you will be quiet enough,

for the nearest town is five miles distant, and there are only a few huts and hedge public-houses in the neighbourhood. Brother, I am fond of solitude myself, but not that kind of solitude; I like a quiet heath where I can pitch my house, but I always like to have a gay stirring place not far off, where the women can pen dukkerin, and I myself can sell or buy a horse, if needful — such a place as the Chong Gav. I never feel so merry as when there, brother, or on the heath above it, where I taught you Romany.'

Shortly after this discourse we reached a milestone, and a few yards from the milestone, on the left hand, was a cross-road. Thereupon Mr. Petulengro said, 'Brother, my path lies to the left; if you choose to go with me to my camp, good, if not, Chal Devlehi.' But I again refused Mr. Petulengro's invitation, and, shaking him by the hand, proceeded forward alone, and about ten miles farther on I reached the town of which he had spoken, and following certain directions which he had given, discovered, though not without some difficulty, the dingle which he had mentioned. It was a deep hollow in the midst of a wide field, the shelving sides were overgrown with trees and bushes, a belt of willows surrounded it on the top, a steep, winding path led down into the depths, practicable, however, for a light cart, like mine; at the bottom was an open space, and there I pitched my tent, and

there I contrived to put up my forge. 'I will here ply the trade of kaulomesco,' said I.

I believe the life of any blacksmith, especially a rural one, would afford materials for a highly poetical history. I do not speak unadvisedly, having the honour to be free of the forge, and therefore fully competent to give an opinion as to what might be made out of the forge by some dexterous hand. Certainly the strangest and most entertaining life ever written is that of a blacksmith of the olden north, a certain Volundr, or Velint, who lived in woods and thickets, made keen swords — so keen, indeed, that if placed in a running stream, they would fairly divide an object, however slight, which was borne against them by the water — and who eventually married a king's daughter, by whom he had a son, who was as bold a knight as his father was a cunning blacksmith. I never see a forge at night, when seated on the back of my horse at the bottom of a dark lane, but I somehow or other associate it with the exploits of this extraordinary fellow, with many other extraordinary things, amongst which, as I have hinted before, are particular passages of my own life, one or two of which I shall perhaps relate to the reader.

I never associate Vulcan and his Cyclops with the idea of a forge. These gentry would be the very last people in the world to flit across my mind whilst gazing at the forge from the bottom of the dark

lane. The truth is, they are highly unpoetical fellows, as well they may be, connected as they are with Grecian mythology. At the very mention of their names the forge burns dull and dim, as if snowballs had been suddenly flung into it; the only remedy is to ply the bellows, an operation which I now hasten to perform.

I am in the dingle making a horse-shoe. Having no other horses on whose hoofs I could exercise my art, I made my first essay on those of my own horse, if that could be called horse which horse was none, being only a pony. Perhaps if I had sought all England I should scarcely have found an animal more in need of the kind offices of the smith. On three of his feet there were no shoes at all, and on the fourth only a remnant of one, on which account his hoofs were sadly broken and lacerated by his late journeys over the hard and flinty roads. 'You belonged to a tinker before,' said I, addressing the animal, 'but now you belong to a smith. It is said that the household of the shoemaker invariably go worse shod than that of any other craft. That may be the case of those who make shoes of leather, but it sha'n't be said of the household of him who makes shoes of iron; at any rate, it sha'n't be said of mine. I tell you what, my gry, whilst you continue with me, you shall both be better shod and better fed than you were with your last master.'

I am in the dingle making a petul; and I must here

observe, that whilst I am making a horse-shoe, the reader need not be surprised if I speak occasionally in the language of the lord of the horse-shoe — Mr. Petulengro. I have for some time past been plying the peshota, or bellows, endeavouring to raise up the yag, or fire, in my primitive forge. The angar, or coals, are now burning fiercely, casting forth sparks and long vagescoe chipes, or tongues of flame; a small bar of sastra, or iron, is lying in the fire, to the length of ten or twelve inches, and so far it is hot, very hot, exceeding hot, brother. And now you see me prala, snatch the bar of iron, and place the heated end of it upon the covantza, or anvil, and forthwith I commence cooring the sastra as hard as if I had been just engaged by a master at the rate of dui caulor, or two shillings a day, brother; and when I have beaten the iron till it is nearly cool, and my arm tired, I place it again in the angar, and begin again to rouse the fire with the pudamengro, which signifies the blowing thing, and is another and more common word for bellows, and whilst thus employed I sing a gipsy song, the sound of which is wonderfully in unison with the hoarse moaning of the pudamengro, and ere the song is finished, the iron is again hot and malleable. Behold, I place it once more on the covantza, and recommence hammering; and now I am somewhat at fault; I am in want of assistance; I want you, brother, or someone else, to take the bar out of my hand and support it

upon the covantza, whilst I, applying a chinomes-cro, or kind of chisel, to the heated iron, cut off with a lusty stroke or two of the shukaro baro, or big hammer, as much as is required for the petul. But having no one to help me, I go on hammering till I have fairly knocked off as much as I want, and then I place the piece in the fire, and again apply the bellows, and take up the song where I left it off; and when I have finished the song, I take out the iron, but this time with my plaistra, or pincers, and then I recommence hammering, turning the iron round and round with my pincers: and now I bend the iron, and lo, and behold, it has assumed something the outline of a petul.

I am not going to enter into farther details with respect to the process — it was rather a wearisome one. I had to contend with various disadvantages; my forge was a rude one, my tools might have been better; I was in want of one or two highly necessary implements, but above all, manual dexterity. Though free of the forge, I had not practised the albeytarian art for very many years; never since — but stay, it is not my intention to tell the reader, at least in this place, how and when I became a blacksmith. There was one thing, however, which stood me in good stead in my labour — the same thing which through life has ever been of incalculable utility to me, and has not unfrequently supplied the place of friends, money, and many other things

of almost equal importance — iron perseverance, without which all the advantages of time and circumstance are of very little avail in any undertaking. I was determined to make a horse-shoe, and a good one in spite of every obstacle — ay, in spite of dukkerin. At the end of four days, during which I had fashioned and refashioned the thing at least fifty times, I made a petul such as no master of the craft need have been ashamed of; with the second shoe I had less difficulty, and, by the time I had made the fourth, I would have scorned to take off my hat to the best smith in Cheshire.

But I had not yet shod my little gry; this I proceeded now to do. After having first well pared the hoofs with my churi, I applied each petul hot, glowing hot, to the pindro. Oh, how the hoofs hissed! and oh, the pleasant pungent odour which diffused itself through the dingle! an odour good for an ailing spirit.

I shod the little horse bravely — merely pricked him once, slightly, with a cafi, for doing which, I remember, he kicked me down: I was not disconcerted, however, but, getting up, promised to be more cautious in future; and having finished the operation, I filed the hoof well with the rin baro, then dismissed him to graze amongst the trees, and, putting my smaller tools into the muchtar, I sat down on my stone, and, supporting my arm upon my knee, leaned my head upon my hand. Heaviness had come over me.

CHAPTER XXV

Two mornings after the period to which I have brought the reader in the preceding chapter, I sat by my fire at the bottom of the dingle. I had just breakfasted, and had finished the last morsel of food which I had brought with me to that solitude.

‘What shall I now do?’ said I to myself; ‘shall I continue here, or decamp? This is a sad, lonely spot — perhaps I had better quit it; but whither should I go? the wide world is before me, but what can I do therein? I have been in the world already without much success. No, I had better remain here. The place is lonely, it is true; but here I am free and independent, and can do what I please. But I can’t remain here without food. Well, I will find my way to the nearest town, lay in a fresh supply of provisions, and come back, turning my back upon the world, which has turned its back upon me. I don’t see why I should not write a little sometimes; I have pens and an ink-horn, and for a writing-desk I can place the Bible on my knee. I shouldn’t wonder if I could write a capital satire on the world on the back of that Bible; but first of all I must think of supplying myself with food.’

I rose up from the stone on which I was seated, determining to go to the nearest town, with my

little horse and cart, and procure what I wanted — the nearest town, according to my best calculation, lay about five miles distant. I had no doubt, however, that by using ordinary diligence, I should be back before evening. In order to go lighter, I determined to leave my tent standing as it was, and all the things which I had purchased of the tinker, just as they were. ‘I need not be apprehensive on their account,’ said I to myself; ‘nobody will come here to meddle with them — the great recommendation of this place is its perfect solitude — I daresay that I could live here six months without seeing a single human visage. I will now harness my little gry and be off to the town.’

At a whistle which I gave, the little gry, which was feeding on the bank near the uppermost part of the dingle, came running to me, for by this time he had become so accustomed to me that he would obey my call for all the world as if he had been one of the canine species. ‘Now,’ said I to him, ‘we are going to the town to buy bread for myself, and oats for you. I am in a hurry to be back; therefore, I pray you to do your best, and to draw me and the cart to the town with all possible speed, and to bring us back. If you do your best, I promise you oats on your return. You know the meaning of oats, Ambrol?’

Ambrol whinnied as if to let me know that he understood me perfectly well, as indeed he well

might, as I had never once fed him during the time he had been in my possession without saying the word in question to him. Now, Ambrol, in the gipsy tongue, signifieth a pear.

So I caparisoned Ambrol, and then, going to the cart, I removed two or three things from out it into the tent; I then lifted up the shafts, and was just going to call to the pony to come and be fastened to them, when I thought I heard a noise.

I stood stock-still, supporting the shaft of the little cart in my hand, and bending the right side of my face slightly towards the ground; but I could hear nothing; the noise which I thought I had heard was not one of those sounds which I was accustomed to hear in that solitude, the note of a bird, or the rustling of a bough; it was — there I heard it again, a sound very much resembling the grating of a wheel amongst gravel. Could it proceed from the road? Oh no! the road was too far distant for me to hear the noise of anything moving along it. Again I listened, and now I distinctly heard the sound of wheels, which seemed to be approaching the dingle; nearer and nearer they drew, and presently the sound of wheels was blended with the murmur of voices. Anon I heard a boisterous shout, which seemed to proceed from the entrance of the dingle. ‘Here are folks at hand,’ said I, letting the shaft of the cart fall to the ground; ‘is it possible that they can be coming here?’

My doubts on that point, if I entertained any, were soon dispelled; the wheels, which had ceased moving for a moment or two, were once again in motion, and were now evidently moving down the winding path which led to my retreat. Leaving my cart, I came forward and placed myself near the entrance of the open space, with my eyes fixed on the path down which my unexpected, and I may say unwelcome, visitors were coming. Presently I heard a stamping or sliding, as if of a horse in some difficulty; and then a loud curse, and the next moment appeared a man and a horse and cart; the former holding the head of the horse up to prevent him from falling, of which he was in danger, owing to the precipitous nature of the path. Whilst thus occupied, the head of the man was averted from me. When, however, he had reached the bottom of the descent, he turned his head, and perceiving me, as I stood bare-headed, without either coat or waistcoat, about two yards from him, he gave a sudden start, so violent, that the backward motion of his hand had nearly flung the horse upon his haunches.

‘Why don’t you move forward?’ said a voice from behind, apparently that of a female; ‘you are stopping up the way, and we shall be all down upon one another.’ And I saw the head of another horse overtopping the back of the cart.

‘Why don’t you move forward, Jack?’ said an-

other voice, also of a female, yet higher up the path.

The man stirred not, but remained staring at me in the posture which he had assumed on first perceiving me, his body very much drawn back, his left foot far in advance of his right, and with his right hand still grasping the halter of the horse, which gave way more and more, till it was clean down on its haunches.

‘What’s the matter?’ said the voice which I had last heard.

‘Get back with you, Belle, Moll,’ said the man, still staring at me, ‘here’s something not over-canny or comfortable here.’

‘What is it?’ said the same voice; ‘let me pass, Moll, and I’ll soon clear the way,’ and I heard a kind of rushing down the path.

‘You need not be afraid,’ said I, addressing myself to the man, ‘I mean you no harm; I am a wanderer like yourself — come here to seek for shelter — you need not be afraid; I am a Rome chabo by matriculation — one of the right sort, and no mistake — Good-day to ye, brother; I bids ye welcome.’

The man eyed me suspiciously for a moment — then, turning to his horse with a loud curse, he pulled him up from his haunches, and led him and the cart farther down to one side of the dingle, muttering as he passed me, ‘Afraid. H’m!’

I do not remember ever to have seen a more

ruffianly-looking fellow; he was about six feet high, with an immensely athletic frame; his face was black and bluff, and sported an immense pair of whiskers, but with here and there a grey hair, for his age could not be much under fifty. He wore a faded blue frock-coat, corduroys, and highlows — on his black head was a kind of red night-cap, round his bull neck a Barcelona handkerchief — I did not like the look of the man at all.

‘Afraid,’ growled the fellow, proceeding to unharness his horse; ‘that was the word, I think.’

But other figures were now already upon the scene. Dashing past the other horse and cart, which by this time had reached the bottom of the pass, appeared an exceedingly tall woman, or rather girl, for she could scarcely have been above eighteen; she was dressed in a tight bodice, and a blue stuff gown; hat, bonnet, or cap she had none, and her hair, which was flaxen, hung down on her shoulders unconfined; her complexion was fair, and her features handsome, with a determined but open expression — she was followed by another female, about forty, stout and vulgar-looking, at whom I scarcely glanced, my whole attention being absorbed by the tall girl.

‘What’s the matter, Jack?’ said the latter, looking at the man.

‘Only afraid, that’s all,’ said the man, still proceeding with his work.

‘Afraid at what — at that lad? why, he looks like a ghost — I would engage to thrash him with one hand.’

‘You might beat me with no hands at all,’ said I, ‘fair damsel, only by looking at me. I never saw such a face and figure, both regal — why, you look like Ingeborg, Queen of Norway; she had twelve brothers, you know, and could lick them all, though they were heroes —

“On Dovrefeld in Norway,
Were once together seen,
The twelve heroic brothers
Of Ingeborg the queen.”

‘None of your chaffing, young fellow,’ said the tall girl, ‘or I will give you what shall make you wipe your face; be civil, or you will rue it.’

‘Well, perhaps I was a peg too high,’ said I, ‘I ask your pardon — here’s something a bit lower —

“As I was jawing to the gav yeck divvus
I met on the drom miro Romany chi ——”

‘None of your Romany chies, young fellow,’ said the tall girl, looking more menacingly than before, and clenching her fist, ‘you had better be civil, I am none of your chies; and, though I keep company with gipsies, or, to speak more proper, half-and-halves, I would have you to know that I come of Christian blood and parents, and was born in the great house of Long Melford.’

‘I have no doubt,’ said I, ‘that it was a great

house; judging from your size, I shouldn't wonder if you were born in a church.'

'Stay, Belle,' said the man, putting himself before the young virago, who was about to rush on me, 'my turn is first'; — then, advancing to me in a menacing attitude, he said, with a look of deep malignity, "'Afraid" was the word, wasn't it?'

'It was,' said I, 'but I think I wronged you; I should have said, aghast, you exhibited every symptom of one labouring under uncontrollable fear.'

The fellow stared at me with a look of stupid ferocity, and appeared to be hesitating whether to strike or not: ere he could make up his mind, the tall girl stepped forward, crying, 'He's chaffing; let me at him'; and, before I could put myself on my guard, she struck me a blow on the face which had nearly brought me to the ground.

'Enough,' said I, putting my hand to my cheek; 'you have now performed your promise, and made me wipe my face; now be pacified, and tell me fairly the ground of this quarrel.'

'Grounds!' said the fellow; 'didn't you say I was afraid; and if you hadn't, who gave you leave to camp on my ground?'

'Is it your ground?' said I.

'A pretty question,' said the fellow; 'as if all the world didn't know that. Do you know who I am?'

'I guess I do,' said I; 'unless I am much mistaken, you are he whom folks call the "Flaming

Tinman." To tell you the truth, I'm glad we have met, for I wished to see you. These are your two wives, I suppose; I greet them. There's no harm done — there's room enough here for all of us — we shall soon be good friends, I dare say; and when we are a little better acquainted, I'll tell you my history.'

'Well, if that doesn't beat all,' said the fellow.

'I don't think he's chaffing now,' said the girl, whose anger seemed to have subsided on a sudden; 'the young man speaks civil enough.'

'Civil,' said the fellow, with an oath; 'but that's just like you; with you it is a blow, and all over. Civil! I suppose you would have him stay here, and get into all my secrets, and hear all I may have to say to my two morts.'

'Two morts,' said the girl, kindling up, 'where are they? Speak for one, and no more. I am no mort of yours, whatever someone else may be. I tell you one thing, Black John, or Anselo, for t'other an't your name, the same thing I told the young man here, be civil, or you will rue it.'

The fellow looked at the girl furiously, but his glance soon quailed before hers; he withdrew his eyes, and cast them on my little horse, which was feeding among the trees. 'What's this?' said he, rushing forward and seizing the animal. 'Why, as I'm alive, this is the horse of that mumping villain Slingsby.'

‘It’s his no longer; I bought it and paid for it.’

‘It’s mine now,’ said the fellow; ‘I swore I would seize it the next time I found it on my beat; ay, and beat the master too.’

‘I am not Slingsby.’

‘All’s one for that.’

‘You don’t say you will beat me?’

‘Afraid was the word.’

‘I’m sick and feeble.’

‘Hold up your fists.’

‘Won’t the horse satisfy you?’

‘Horse nor bellows either.’

‘No mercy, then.’

‘Here’s at you.’

‘Mind your eyes, Jack. There, you’ve got it. I thought so,’ shouted the girl, as the fellow staggered back from a sharp blow in the eye. ‘I thought he was chaffing at you all along.’

‘Never mind, Anselo. You know what to do — go in,’ said the vulgar woman, who had hitherto not spoken a word, but who now came forward with all the look of a fury; ‘go in apopli; you’ll smash ten like he.’

The Flaming Tinman took her advice, and came in bent on smashing, but stopped short on receiving a left-handed blow on the nose.

‘You’ll never beat the Flaming Tinman in that way,’ said the girl, looking at me doubtfully.

And so I began to think myself, when, in the

twinkling of an eye, the Flaming Tinman disengaged himself of his frock-coat, and, dashing off his red night-cap, came rushing in more desperately than ever. To a flush hit which he received in the mouth he paid as little attention as a wild bull would have done; in a moment his arms were around me, and in another, he had hurled me down, falling heavily upon me. The fellow's strength appeared to be tremendous.

'Pay him off now,' said the vulgar woman. The Flaming Tinman made no reply, but planting his knee on my breast, seized my throat with two huge horny hands. I gave myself up for dead, and probably should have been so in another minute but for the tall girl, who caught hold of the handkerchief, which the fellow wore round his neck, with a grasp nearly as powerful as that with which he pressed my throat.

'Do you call that fair play?' said she.

'Hands off, Belle,' said the other woman; 'do you call it fair play to interfere? hands off, or I'll be down upon you myself.'

But Belle paid no heed to the injunction, and tugged so hard at the handkerchief that the Flaming Tinman was nearly throttled; suddenly relinquishing his hold of me, he started on his feet, and aimed a blow at my fair preserver, who avoided it, but said coolly:

'Finish t'other business first, and then I'm your

woman whenever you like; but finish it fairly — no foul play when I'm by — I'll be the boy's second, and Moll can pick you up when he happens to knock you down.'

The battle during the next ten minutes raged with considerable fury, but it so happened that during this time I was never able to knock the Flaming Tinman down, but on the contrary received six knock-down blows myself. 'I can never stand this,' said I, as I sat on the knee of Belle, 'I am afraid I must give in; the Flaming Tinman hits very hard,' and I spat out a mouthful of blood.

'Sure enough you'll never beat the Flaming Tinman in the way you fight — it's of no use flipping at the Flaming Tinman with your left hand; why don't you use your right?'

'Because I'm not handy with it,' said I; and then getting up, I once more confronted the Flaming Tinman, and struck him six blows for his one, but they were all left-handed blows, and the blow which the Flaming Tinman gave me knocked me off my legs.

'Now, will you use Long Melford?' said Belle, picking me up.

'I don't know what you mean by Long Melford,' said I, gasping for breath.

'Why, this long right of yours,' said Belle, feeling my right arm — 'if you do, I shouldn't wonder if you yet stand a chance.'

And now the Flaming Tinman was once more

ready, much more ready than myself. I, however, rose from my second's knee as well as my weakness would permit me; on he came, striking left and right, appearing almost as fresh as to wind and spirit as when he first commenced the combat, though his eyes were considerably swelled, and his nether lip was cut in two; on he came, striking left and right, and I did not like his blows at all, or even the wind of them, which was anything but agreeable, and I gave way before him. At last he aimed a blow, which, had it taken full effect, would doubtless have ended the battle, but owing to his slipping, the fist only grazed my left shoulder, and came with terrific force against a tree, close to which I had been driven; before the Tinman could recover himself, I collected all my strength, and struck him beneath the ear, and then fell to the ground completely exhausted, and it so happened that the blow which I struck the tinker beneath the ear was a right-handed blow.

‘Hurrah for Long Melford!’ I heard Belle exclaim; ‘there is nothing like Long Melford for shortness all the world over.’

At these words, I turned round my head as I lay, and perceived the Flaming Tinman stretched upon the ground apparently senseless. ‘He is dead,’ said the vulgar woman, as she vainly endeavoured to raise him up; ‘he is dead; the best man in all the north country, killed in this fashion, by a boy.’

Alarmed at these words, I made shift to get on my feet; and, with the assistance of the woman, placed my fallen adversary in a sitting posture. I put my hand to his heart, and felt a slight pulsation — ‘He’s not dead,’ said I, ‘only stunned; if he were let blood, he would recover presently.’ I produced a penknife which I had in my pocket, and, baring the arm of the Tinman, was about to make the necessary incision, when the woman gave me a violent blow, and, pushing me aside, exclaimed, ‘I’ll tear the eyes out of your head if you offer to touch him. Do you want to complete your work, and murder him outright, now he’s asleep? you have had enough of his blood already.’ ‘You are mad,’ said I, ‘I only seek to do him service. Well, if you won’t let him be blooded, fetch some water and fling it into his face, you know where the pit is.’

‘A pretty manœuvre,’ said the woman; ‘leave my mard in the hands of you and that limmer, who has never been true to us; I should find him strangled, or his throat cut, when I came back.’ ‘Do you go,’ said I to the tall girl, ‘take the can and fetch some water from the pit.’ ‘You had better go yourself,’ said the girl, wiping a tear as she looked on the yet senseless form of the tinker; ‘you had better go yourself if you think water will do him good.’ I had by this time somewhat recovered my exhausted powers, and, taking the can, I bent my steps as fast as I could to the pit; arriving there, I lay down on

the brink, took a long draught and then plunged my head into the water, after which I filled the can, and bent my way back to the dingle. Before I could reach the path which led down into its depths, I had to pass some way along its side; I had arrived at a part immediately over the scene of the last encounter, where the bank, overgrown with trees, sloped precipitously down. Here I heard a loud sound of voices in the dingle; I stopped, and laying hold of a tree, leaned over the bank and listened. The two women appeared to be in hot dispute in the dingle. 'It was all one to you, you limmer,' said the vulgar woman to the other; 'had you not interfered the old man would soon have settled the boy.'

'I'm for fair play and Long Melford,' said the other. 'If your old man, as you call him, could have settled the boy fairly, he might, for all I should have cared, but no foul work for me; and as for sticking the boy with our gulleys when he comes back, as you proposed, I am not so fond of your old man or you that I should oblige you in it to my soul's destruction.' 'Hold your tongue, or I'll ——'; I listened no farther, but hastened as fast as I could to the dingle. My adversary had just begun to show signs of animation; the vulgar woman was still supporting him, and occasionally cast glances of anger at the tall girl who was walking slowly up and down. I lost no time in dashing the greater part of the water into the Tinman's face, whereupon he sneezed,

moved his hands, and presently looked round him. At first his looks were dull and heavy and without any intelligence at all; he soon, however, began to recollect himself, and to be conscious of his situation; he cast a scowling glance at me, then one of the deepest malignity at the tall girl, who was still walking about without taking much notice of what was going forward. At last he looked at his right hand, which had evidently suffered from the blow against the tree, and a half-stifled curse escaped his lips. The vulgar woman now said something to him in a low tone, whereupon he looked at her for a moment, and then got upon his legs. Again the vulgar woman said something to him; her looks were furious, and she appeared to be urging him on to attempt something. I observed that she had a clasped knife in her hand. The fellow remained standing for some time as if hesitating what to do, at last he looked at his hand, and, shaking his head, said something to the woman which I did not understand. The tall girl, however, appeared to overhear him, and, probably repeating his words, said, 'No, it won't do; you are right there, and now hear what I have to say — let bygones be bygones, and let us all shake hands, and camp here, as the young man was saying just now.' The man looked at her, and then, without any reply, went to his horse, which was lying down among the trees, and kicking it up, led it to the cart, to which he forth-

with began to harness it. The other cart and horse had remained standing motionless, during the whole affair which I have been recounting, at the bottom of the pass. The woman now took the horse by the head, and, leading it with the cart into the open part of the dingle, turned both round and then led them back till the horse and cart had mounted a little way up the ascent; she then stood still and appeared to be expecting the man. During this proceeding Belle had stood looking on without saying anything; at last, perceiving that the man had harnessed his horse to the other cart, and that both he and the woman were about to take their departure, she said, 'You are not going, are you?' Receiving no answer, she continued: 'I tell you what, both of you, Black John, and you Moll, his mort, this is not treating me over civilly — however, I am ready to put up with it and go with you if you like, for I bear no malice. I'm sorry for what has happened, but you have only yourselves to thank for it. Now, shall I go with you, only tell me?' The man made no manner of reply, but flogged his horse. The woman, however, whose passions were probably under less control, replied with a screeching tone, 'Stay where you are, you jade, and may the curse of Judas cling to you — stay with the bit of a mullo whom you helped, and my only hope is that he may gulley you before he comes to be —— Have you with us, indeed! after

what's past, no, nor nothing belonging to you. Fetch down your mailla go-cart and live here with your chabo.' She then whipped on the horse and ascended the pass, followed by the man. The carts were light, and they were not long in ascending the winding path. I followed to see that they took their departure. Arriving at the top, I found, near the entrance, a small donkey-cart, which I concluded belonged to the girl. The tinker and his mort were already at some distance; I stood looking after them for a little time, then taking the donkey by the reins I led it with the cart to the bottom of the dingle. Arrived there, I found Belle seated on the stone by the fireplace. Her hair was all dishevelled and she was in tears.

'They were bad people,' said she, 'and I did not like them, but they were my only acquaintance in the wide world.'

CHAPTER XXVI

IN the evening of that same day the tall girl and I sat at tea by the fire at the bottom of the dingle, the girl on a small stool, and myself, as usual, upon my stone.

The water which served for the tea had been taken from a spring of pellucid water in the neighbourhood, which I had not had the good fortune to discover, though it was well known to my companion and to the wandering people who frequented the dingle.

‘This tea is very good,’ said I, ‘but I cannot enjoy it as much as if I were well; I feel very sadly.’

‘How else should you feel,’ said the girl, ‘after fighting with the Flaming Tinman! All I wonder is that you can feel at all! As for the tea, it ought to be good, seeing that it cost me ten shillings a pound.’

‘That’s a great deal for a person in your station to pay.’

‘In my station! I’d have you to know, young man — however, I haven’t the heart to quarrel with you, you look so ill; and after all, it is a good sum to pay for one who travels the roads; but if I must have tea, I like to have the best; and tea I must have, for I am used to it, though I can’t help

thinking that it sometimes fills my head with strange fancies — what some folks call vapours, making me weep and cry.’

‘Dear me,’ said I, ‘I should never have thought that one of your size and fierceness would weep and cry!’

‘My size and fierceness! I tell you what, young man, you are not over civil this evening; but you are ill, as I said before, and I sha’n’t take much notice of your language, at least for the present; as for my size, I am not so much bigger than yourself; and as for being fierce, you should be the last one to fling that at me. It is well for you that I can be fierce sometimes. If I hadn’t taken your part against Blazing Bosville, you wouldn’t be now taking tea with me.’

‘It is true that you struck me in the face first, but we’ll let that pass. So that man’s name is Bosville; what’s your own?’

‘Isopel Berners.’

‘How did you get that name?’

‘I say, young man, you seem fond of asking questions! will you have another cup of tea?’

‘I was just going to ask for another.’

‘Well, then, here it is, and much good may it do you; as for my name, I got it from my mother.’

‘Your mother’s name, then, was Isopel?’

‘Isopel Berners.’

‘But had you never a father?’

‘Yes, I had a father,’ said the girl, sighing, ‘but I don’t bear his name.’

‘Is it the fashion, then, in your country for children to bear their mother’s name?’

‘If you ask such questions, young man, I shall be angry with you. I have told you my name, and whether my father’s or mother’s, I am not ashamed of it.’

‘It is a noble name.’

‘There you are right, young man. The chaplain in the great house where I was born told me it was a noble name; it was odd enough, he said, that the only three noble names in the county were to be found in the great house; mine was one; the other two were Devereaux and Bohun.’

‘What do you mean by the great house?’

‘The workhouse.’

‘Is it possible that you were born there?’

‘Yes, young man; and as you now speak softly and kindly, I will tell you my whole tale. My father was an officer of the sea, and was killed at sea, after he had struck down six of the enemy’s crew on their own deck; for my father was a big man, as I have heard, and knew tolerably well how to use his hands. And when my mother heard the news she became half distracted and ran away into the fields and forests, totally neglecting her business, for she was a small milliner; and so she ran demented about the meads and forests for a long

time, now sitting under a tree, and now by the side of a river — at last she flung herself into some water and would have been drowned had not someone been at hand and rescued her, whereupon she was conveyed to the great house lest she should attempt to do herself further mischief, for she had neither friends nor parents — and there she died three months after, having first brought me into the world. She was a sweet, pretty creature, I'm told, but hardly fit for this world, being neither large, nor fierce, nor able to take her own part. So I was born and bred in the great house, where I learnt to read and sew, to fear God, and to take my own part. When I was fourteen I was put out to service to a small farmer and his wife, with whom, however, I did not stay long, for I was half starved and otherwise ill-treated, especially by my mistress, who one day attempting to knock me down with a besom, I knocked her down with my fist and went back to the great house.'

'And how did they receive you in the great house?'

'Not very kindly, young man; on the contrary, I was put into a dark room, where I was kept a fortnight on bread and water; I did not much care, however, being glad to have got back to the great house at any rate, the place where I was born and where my poor mother died, and in the great house I continued two years longer, reading and sewing, fearing

God, and taking my own part when necessary. At the end of the two years I was again put out to service, but this time to a rich farmer and his wife, with whom, however, I did not live long — less time, I believe, than with the poor ones, being obliged to leave for ——’

‘Knocking your mistress down?’

‘No, young man, knocking my master down, who conducted himself improperly towards me. This time I did not go back to the great house, having a misgiving that they would not receive me, so I turned my back to the great house where I was born and where my poor mother died, and wandered for several days, I know not whither, supporting myself on a few halfpence which I chanced to have in my pocket. It happened one day, as I sat under a hedge crying, having spent my last farthing, that a comfortable-looking elderly woman came up in a cart, and, seeing the state in which I was, she stopped and asked what was the matter with me. I told her some part of my story, whereupon she said, “Cheer up, my dear, if you like you shall go with me and wait upon me.” Of course I wanted little persuasion, so I got into the cart and went with her. She took me to London and various other places, and I soon found that she was a travelling woman who went about the country with silks and linen. I was of great use to her, more especially in those places where we met evil company. Once, as we were com-

ing from Dover, we were met by two sailors, who stopped our cart and would have robbed and stripped us. "Let me get down," said I; so I got down and fought with them both till they turned round and ran away. Two years I lived with the old gentlewoman, who was very kind to me, almost as kind as a mother; at last she fell sick at a place in Lincolnshire, and after a few days died, leaving me her cart and stock-in-trade, praying me only to see her decently buried, which I did, giving her a funeral fit for a gentlewoman. After which I travelled the country melancholy enough for want of company, but so far fortunate that I could take my own part when anybody was uncivil to me. At last, passing through the valley of Todmorden, I formed the acquaintance of Blazing Bosville and his wife, with whom I occasionally took journeys for company's sake, for it is melancholy to travel about alone, even when one can take one's own part. I soon found they were evil people, but, upon the whole, they treated me civilly, and I sometimes lent them a little money, so that we got on tolerably well together. He and I, it is true, had once a dispute, and nearly came to blows, for once, when we were alone, he wanted me to marry him, promising, if I would, to turn off Gray Moll, or, if I liked it better, to make her wait upon me as a maidservant; I never liked him much, but from that hour less than ever. Of the two I believe Gray Moll to be the

best, for she is at any rate true and faithful to him, and I like truth and constancy; don't you, young man?'

'Yes,' said I, 'they are very nice things. I feel very strangely.'

'You would do well with a mug of ale,' said the tall girl. 'There is an inn at no great distance.'

CHAPTER XXVII

THE kitchen of the public-house was a large one, and many people were drinking in it; there was a confused hubbub of voices.

I sat down on a bench behind a deal table, of which there were three or four in the kitchen. Presently a bulky man, in a green coat of the New-market cut, and without a hat, entered, and observing me, came up, and in rather a gruff tone cried, 'Want anything, young fellow?'

'Bring me a jug of ale,' said I, 'if you are the master, as I suppose you are, by that same coat of yours, and your having no hat on your head.'

'Don't be saucy, young fellow,' said the landlord, for such he was, 'don't be saucy, or ——' Whatever he intended to say he left unsaid, for, fixing his eyes upon one of my hands, which I had placed by chance upon the table, he became suddenly still.

This was my left hand, which was raw and swollen from the blows dealt on a certain hard skull in a recent combat. 'What do you mean by staring at my hand so?' said I, withdrawing it from the table.

'No offence, young man, no offence,' said the landlord, in a quite altered tone, 'but the sight of your hand ——'; then, observing that our conver-

sation began to attract the notice of the guests in the kitchen, he interrupted himself, saying in an undertone, 'But mum's the word for the present, I will go and fetch the ale.'

In about a minute he returned with a jug of ale foaming high. 'Here's your health,' said he, blowing off the foam and drinking; but perceiving that I looked rather dissatisfied, he murmured, 'All's right, I glory in you; but mum's the word.' Then placing the jug on the table, he gave me a confidential nod, and swaggered out of the room.

What can the silly, impertinent fellow mean? thought I; but the ale was now before me, and I hastened to drink, for my weakness was great, and my mind was full of dark thoughts. It may kill me, thought I, as I drank deep, but who cares? — anything is better than what I have suffered. I drank deep, and then leaned back against the wall; it appeared as if a vapour was stealing up into my brain, gentle and benign, soothing and stilling the horror and the fear; higher and higher it mounted, and I felt nearly overcome; but the sensation was delicious compared with that I had lately experienced, and now I felt myself nodding; and, bending down, I laid my head on the table on my folded hands.

And in that attitude I remained some time perfectly unconscious. At length, by degrees, perception returned, and I lifted up my head. I felt some-

what dizzy and bewildered, but the dark shadow had withdrawn itself from me. And now, once more, I drank of the jug; this second draught did not produce an overpowering effect upon me — it revived and strengthened me — I felt a new man.

I looked around me: the kitchen had been deserted by the greater part of the guests; besides myself, only four remained; these were seated at the farther end. One was haranguing fiercely and eagerly; he was abusing England and praising America. At last he exclaimed, 'So when I gets to New York I will toss up my hat and damn the King.'

That man must be a radical, thought I.

'Landlord,' said I, 'what have I to pay?'

'Nothing at all,' said the landlord; 'glad to see you. This is the first time that you have been at my house, and I never charge new customers, at least customers such as you, anything for the first draught. You'll come again, I dare say; shall always be glad to see you. I won't take it,' said he, as I put sixpence on the table; 'I won't take it.'

The public-house was at the distance of about two miles from the dingle. The sun was sinking in the west by the time I returned to the latter spot. I found Belle seated by a fire, over which her kettle was suspended. During my absence she had prepared herself a kind of tent, consisting of large hoops covered over with tarpaulin, quite impene-

trable to rain, however violent. 'I am glad you are returned,' said she, as soon as she perceived me; 'I began to be anxious about you. Did you take my advice?'

'Yes,' said I; 'I went to the public-house and drank ale as you advised me; it cheered, strengthened, and drove away the horror from my mind — I am much beholden to you.'

'I knew it would do you good,' said Belle; 'I remembered that when the poor women in the great house were afflicted with hysterics and fearful imaginings, the surgeon, who was a good, kind man, used to say, "Ale, give them ale, and let it be strong."'

'He was no advocate for tea, then?' said I.

'He had no objection to tea; but he used to say, "Everything in its season." Shall we take ours now? — I have waited for you.'

'I have no objection,' said I; 'I feel rather heated, and at present should prefer tea to ale — "Everything in its season," as the surgeon said.'

Thereupon Belle prepared tea, and, as we were taking it, she said, 'What did you see and hear at the public-house?'

'Really,' said I, 'you appear to have your full portion of curiosity; what matters it to you what I saw and heard at the public-house?'

'It matters very little to me,' said Belle; 'I merely inquired of you for the sake of a little con-

versation — you were silent, and it is uncomfortable for two people to sit together without opening their lips — at least I think so.'

'One only feels uncomfortable,' said I, 'in being silent, when one happens to be thinking of the individual with whom one is in company. To tell you the truth, I was not thinking of my companion, but of certain company with whom I had been at the public-house.'

'Really, young man,' said Belle, 'you are not over complimentary; but who may this wonderful company have been — some young ——?' and here Belle stopped.

'No,' said I, 'there was no young person — if person you were going to say. There was a big, portly landlord, whom I daresay you have seen; a noisy, savage radical, who wanted to make a quarrel about America; then there was a strange fellow, a prowling priest, I believe. There, you know my company, and what took place.'

'Was there no one else?' said Belle.

'You are mighty curious,' said I. 'No one else, except a poor simple mechanic, and some common company, who soon went away.'

Belle looked at me for a moment, and then appeared to be lost in thought. 'America!' said she musingly — 'America!'

'What of America?' said I.

'I have heard that it is a mighty country.'

‘I dare say it is,’ said I; ‘I have heard my father say that the Americans are first-rate marksmen.’

‘I heard nothing about that,’ said Belle; ‘what I heard was, that it is a great and goodly land, where people can walk about without jostling, and where the industrious can always find bread; I have frequently thought of going thither.’

‘Well,’ I said, ‘the radical in the public-house will perhaps be glad of your company thither; he is as great an admirer of America as yourself, though I believe on different grounds.’

‘I shall go by myself,’ said Belle, ‘unless — unless that should happen, which is not likely — I am not fond of radicals no more than I am of scoffers and mockers.’

‘Do you mean to say that I am a scoffer and mocker?’

‘I don’t wish to say you are,’ said Belle; ‘but some of your words sound strangely like scoffing and mocking. I have now one thing to beg, which is, that if you have anything to say against America, you would speak it out boldly.’

‘What should I have to say against America? I never was there.’

‘Many people speak against America who never were there?’

‘Many people speak in praise of America who never were there; but with respect to myself, I have not spoken for or against America.’

‘If you liked America you would speak in its praise.’

‘By the same rule, if I disliked America I should speak against it.’

‘I can’t speak with you,’ said Belle; ‘but I see you dislike the country.’

‘The country!’

‘Well, the people — don’t you?’

‘I do.’

‘Why do you dislike them?’

‘Why, I have heard my father say that the American marksmen, led on by a chap of the name of Washington, sent the English to the right-about in double-quick time.’

‘And that is your reason for disliking the Americans?’

‘Yes,’ said I, ‘that is my reason for disliking them.’

‘Will you take another cup of tea?’ said Belle.

I took another cup; we were again silent. ‘It is rather uncomfortable,’ said I, at last, ‘for people to sit together without having anything to say.’

‘Were you thinking of your company?’ said Belle.

‘What company?’ said I.

‘The present company.’

‘The present company! oh, ah! — I remember that I said one only feels uncomfortable in being silent with a companion, when one happens to be

thinking of the companion. Well, I had been thinking of you the last two or three minutes, and had just come to the conclusion, that to prevent us both feeling occasionally uncomfortably towards each other, having nothing to say, it would be as well to have a standing subject on which to employ our tongues. Belle, I have determined to give you lessons in Armenian.'

'What is Armenian?'

'Did you ever hear of Ararat?'

'Yes, that was the place where the ark rested; I have heard the chaplain in the great house talk of it; besides, I have read of it in the Bible.'

'Well, Armenian is the speech of the people of that place, and I should like to teach it you.'

'To prevent ——'

'Ay, ay, to prevent our occasionally feeling uncomfortable together. Your acquiring it, besides, might prove of ulterior advantage to us both; for example, suppose you and I were in promiscuous company, at Court, for example, and you had something to communicate to me which you did not wish anyone else to be acquainted with, how safely you might communicate it to me in Armenian.'

'Would not the language of the roads do as well?' said Belle.

'In some places it would,' said I, 'but not at Court, owing to its resemblance to thieves' slang. There is Hebrew, again, which I was thinking of

teaching you, till the idea of being presented at Court made me abandon it, from the probability of our being understood, in the event of our speaking it, by at least half a dozen people in our vicinity. There is Latin, it is true, or Greek, which we might speak aloud at Court with perfect confidence of safety, but upon the whole I should prefer teaching you Armenian, not because it would be a safer language to hold communication with at Court, but because, not being very well grounded in it myself, I am apprehensive that its words and forms may escape from my recollection, unless I have sometimes occasion to call them forth.'

'I am afraid we shall have to part company before I have learnt it,' said Belle; 'in the meantime, if I wish to say anything to you in private, somebody being by, shall I speak in the language of the roads?'

'If no roadster is nigh, you may,' said I, 'and I will do my best to understand you. Belle, I will now give you a lesson in Armenian.'

'I suppose you mean no harm,' said Belle.

'Not in the least; I merely propose the thing to prevent our occasionally feeling uncomfortable together. Let us begin.'

'Stop till I have removed the tea things,' said Belle; and, getting up, she removed them to her own encampment.

'I am ready,' said Belle, returning, and taking her

former seat, 'to join with you in anything which will serve to pass away the time agreeably, provided there is no harm in it.'

'Belle,' said I, 'I have determined to commence the course of Armenian lessons by teaching you the numerals; but, before I do that, it will be as well to tell you that the Armenian language is called Haik.'

'I am sure that word will hang upon my memory,' said Belle.

'Why hang upon it?'

'Because the old women in the great house used to call so the chimney-hook, on which they hung the kettle; in like manner, on the hake of my memory I will hang your hake.'

'Good!' said I; 'you will make an apt scholar; but, mind, that I did not say hake, but haik; the words are, however, very much alike; and, as you observe, upon your hake you may hang my haik. We will now proceed to the numerals.'

'What are numerals?' said Belle.

'Numbers. I will say the Haikan numbers up to ten. There, have you heard them?' — 'Yes.' 'Well, try and repeat them.'

'I only remember number one,' said Belle, 'and that because it is me.'

'I will repeat them again,' said I, 'and pay great attention. Now, try again.'

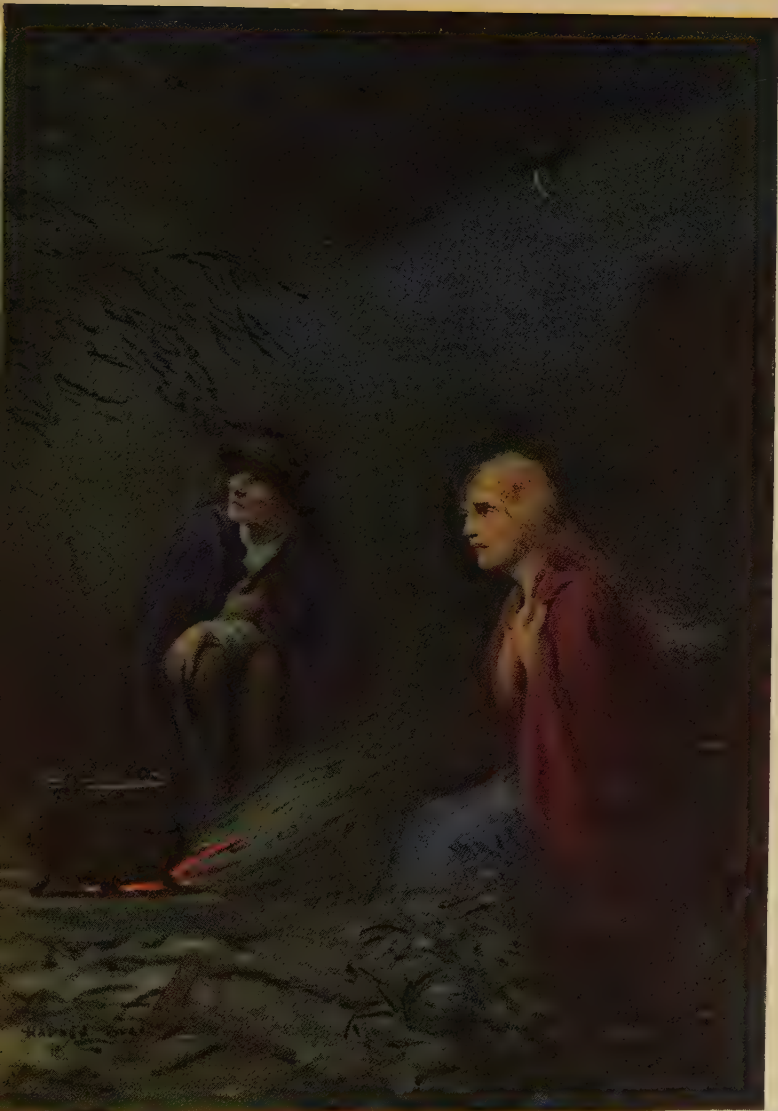
'Me, jergo, earache.'

'I neither said jergo, nor earache. I said yergou

and yerek. Belle, I am afraid I shall have some difficulty with you as a scholar.'

Belle made no answer.

Time passed on, and Belle and I lived in the dingle; when I say lived, the reader must not imagine that we were always there. She went out upon her pursuits, and I went out where inclination led me; but my excursions were very short ones, and hers occasionally occupied whole days and nights. If I am asked how we passed the time when we were together in the dingle, I would answer that we passed the time very tolerably, all things considered; we conversed together, and when tired of conversing I would sometimes give Belle a lesson in Armenian; her progress was not particularly brilliant, but upon the whole satisfactory; in about a fortnight she had hung up one hundred Haikan numerals upon the hake of her memory. I found her conversation highly entertaining; she had seen much of England and Wales, and had been acquainted with some of the most remarkable characters who travelled the roads at that period; and let me be permitted to say that many remarkable characters have travelled the roads of England of whom fame has never said a word. I loved to hear her anecdotes of these people; some of whom I found had occasionally attempted to lay violent hands either upon her person or effects, and had invariably been humbled by her without the assistance of either



IN THE DINGLE

justice or constable. I could clearly see, however, that she was rather tired of England, and wished for a change of scene; she was particularly fond of talking of America, to which country her aspirations chiefly tended. She had heard much of America, which had excited her imagination; for at that time America was much talked of, on roads and in homesteads — at least so said Belle, who had good opportunities of knowing — and most people allowed that it was a good country for adventurous English. The people who chiefly spoke against it, as she informed me, were soldiers disbanded upon pensions, the sextons of village churches, and excisemen. Belle had a craving desire to visit that country, and to wander with cart and little animal amongst its forests; when I would occasionally object that she would be exposed to danger from strange and perverse customers, she said that she had not wandered the roads of England so long and alone to be afraid of anything which might befall in America; and that she hoped, with God's favour, to be able to take her own part, and to give to perverse customers as good as they might bring. She had a dauntless heart that same Belle: such was the staple of Belle's conversation. As for mine, I would endeavour to entertain her with strange dreams of adventure, in which I figured in opaque forests, strangling wild beasts, or discovering and plundering the hordes of dragons; and sometimes I would

narrate to her other things far more genuine — how I had tamed savage mares, wrestled with Satan, and had dealings with ferocious publishers. Belle had a kind heart, and would weep at the accounts I gave her of my early wrestlings with the dark monarch. She would sigh, too, as I recounted the many slights and degradations I had received at the hands of ferocious publishers; but she had the curiosity of a woman; and once, when I talked to her of the triumphs which I had achieved over unbroken mares, she lifted up her head and questioned me as to the secret of the virtue which I possessed over the aforesaid animals; whereupon I sternly reprimanded, and forthwith commanded her to repeat the Armenian numerals; and, on her demurring, I made use of words, to escape which she was glad to comply, saying the Armenian numerals from one to a hundred, which numerals, as a punishment for her curiosity, I made her repeat three times, loading her with the bitterest reproaches whenever she committed the slightest error, either in accent or pronunciation, which reproaches she appeared to bear with the greatest patience. And now I have given a very fair account of the manner in which Isopel Berners and myself passed our time in the dingle.

CONCERNING THE WRITER OF THIS BOOK

GEORGE BORROW, the author of *Lavengro*, was at the same time its principal character. It might be more exact to say that the history of *Lavengro*, the Word-master, follows the life of Borrow in its most important outlines from birth to the age of twenty-two.

Nevertheless, *Lavengro* is not a true autobiography. Much of fancy and imagination is embroidered upon the fabric of fact. Likewise, many dates and names are missing through a modest custom, prevalent in Borrow's time, of hiding behind an asterisk. The following paragraphs will furnish some details, which may be added to the account offered by Borrow himself, to improve an acquaintance with a remarkable man.

George, son of Captain Thomas Borrow, was born at Dumpling Green, near East Dereham, Norfolk, England, on the fifth day of July, 1803. His father was attached, until his retirement from military life, to the West Norfolk Militia, whose movements were necessarily followed by the Borrow family.

Being in this sense a son of the regiment, George had the advantage neither of a settled home, nor of continuous study at one school. Although travel

did much for his mind, his education was by no means so thorough as he thought it. He was, however, gifted with a great desire for learning and an extraordinary memory. By the time he was eighteen he had acquired, in various odd ways, some acquaintance with twelve languages: English, Welsh, Erse, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, Danish, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Such a feat would have been impossible except for his eagerness to snatch at small opportunities.

When George Borrow was sixteen, he was articulated to a firm of lawyers, Messrs. Simpson and Rackham of Norwich. For five years he sat at his 'deal desk,' going through the conventional motions of the law, and dreaming of fame as an author.

The year 1824 was an important one in his life. He was twenty-one years old. It had become evident that he would never be either happy or successful as a lawyer. And his father's death forced him to think how he might earn his own living.

His decision followed his inclination. He gave up the law for all time, and, armed with a letter to Sir Richard Phillips, 'the publisher,' together with a prodigious stack of manuscript produced during his bondage to the law, he went up to London, there to try the fortunes of his pen.

His struggles to have his work published were discouraging. At times he almost lost hope. Lack of money, and consequently of proper food, nearly

ruined his health. For a year he kept up the fight. Then in some way he gained enough money to leave London for a time. In the book, *Lavengro*, the money came from the publication of a novel recounting the adventures of Joseph Sell. There is no trace remaining of such a book, and it has been suggested that the word 'sell' ¹ was intended to imply a departure from fact. At any rate, he did leave London in the latter part of May, 1825.

The second part of *Lavengro* (in this edition from Chapter XVII to the end) is concerned with wanderings which occupied only three months, for we find him again in Norwich in September of the same year.

It is possible that much of the adventure recorded for this time really took place in later years, or that it never took place at all. *Lavengro* was not written until 1843, eighteen years after its supposed date, and eight years later it was published. In either event, whether Borrow actually went through these experiences or merely imagined them, they are his own, for an adventure of the mind is assuredly as personal as one of the body.

There is one character in *Lavengro* who should be mentioned before we conclude this brief sketch of Borrow's life. Jasper Petulengro was a real person. His proper name was Ambrose Smith — of which

¹ See Clement Shorter's *George Borrow and His Circle*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

Petul-engro, Horseshoe-master, is a translation. He was a Gypsy king, and founder of a large family. Sanspirella Herne, daughter of the old poisoner, was his second wife. The Smiths were visited in 1878 by Queen Victoria, who wrote an account of her visit in her journal. Jasper, or Ambrose, died in this same year, aged 74. Most of his family emigrated soon after to America, where there are doubtless many of them living to-day.

The later life of George Borrow may be passed over with few words, since it is not connected particularly with this book. He was a confirmed wanderer, and saw most of his native land on foot. He also travelled extensively on the Continent and in the East. For some time he was a foreign agent of the English Bible Society. His first popular book, the only one, in fact, which struck the public fancy at the time, was a direct result of this work: *The Bible in Spain*.

His last years were spent in Oulton Broad, Norfolk, where he died in 1881.

THE END

